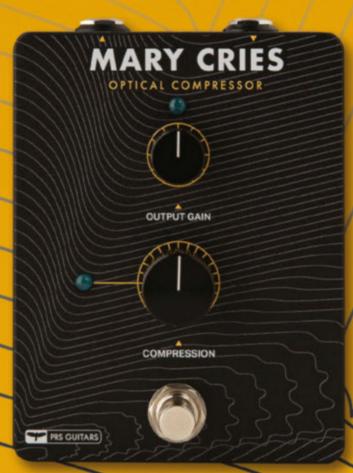


INTRODUCING...







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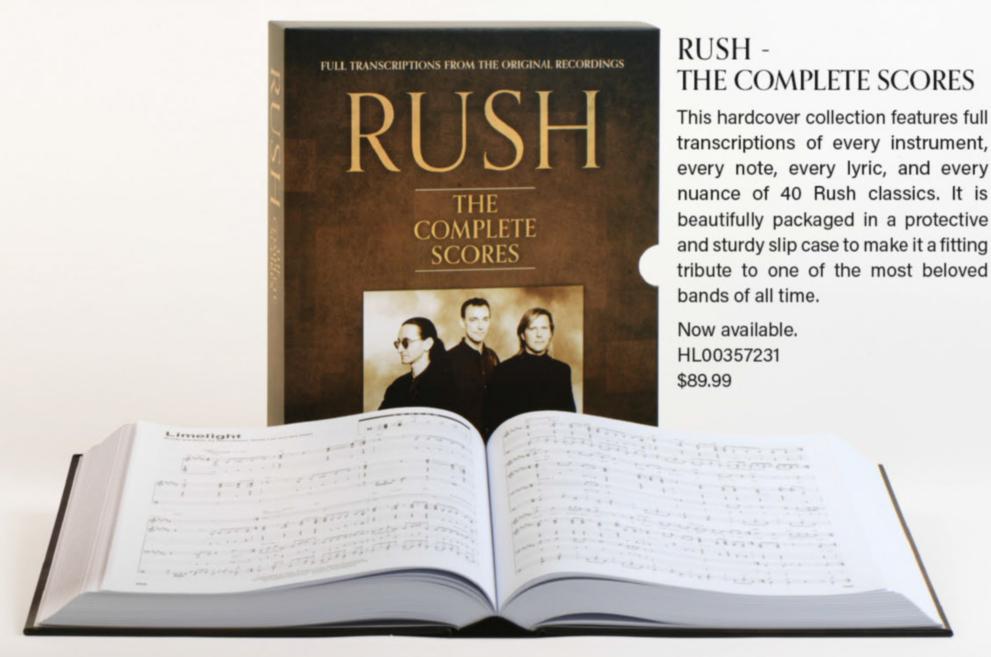
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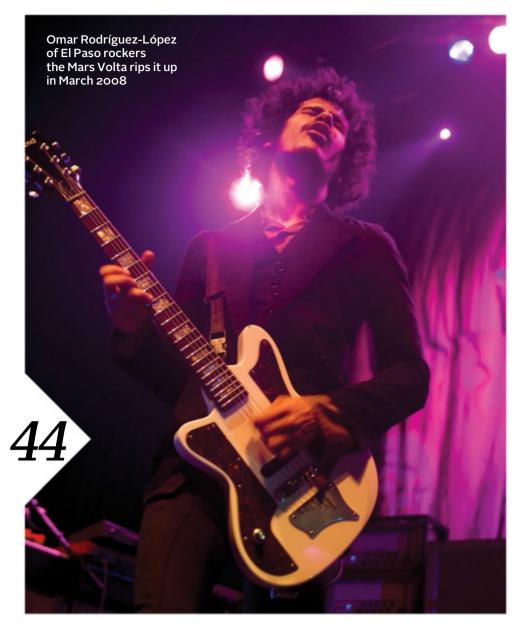
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WOODSHED

VOL. 43 NO. 13 HOLIDAY 2022



TEXAS ON THE HUDSON

I WAS ALL set to tell you about my new TC Electronic Plethora X5 TonePrint Multi-FX Pedalboard when I came across this Getty photo [left] and read the caption: Stevie Ray and Jimmie Vaughan at NYC's Pier 84, June 26, 1986. "Hey," I says to myself, "that's the show that Chris, Bruce and I heard from across the Hudson River in Weehawken!" We also could see bits and pieces of the on-stage action that night, but we were so far away... Stevie and Jimmie were just itty-bitty

dots in cowboy boots. But really, the "1986-ness" of the photo (and the memory itself) reminded me of all of the other great Texas-based music that was in the air at that time. Besides SRV, you had the Fabulous Thunderbirds, Eric Johnson, George Strait and ZZ Top, the resurgent (thanks to Alligator Records!) Albert Collins and Johnny Winter, plus Johnny Copeland, Dirty Rotten Imbeciles, Willie Nelson, the Butthole Surfers... I mean, really, 1986 was pretty much the apex of "Wow, man; there are so many great — and *popular* — Texas guitar bands!" What's more, Pantera and Rigor Mortis were very close to making it big, while artists like the Reverend Horton Heat, Chris Duarte, Polyphia, Shakey Graves, Sue Foley, the Mars Volta, St. Vincent, Arc Angels and Eric Tessmer were still waiting in the wings. And I haven't even mentioned the early masters like Lightnin' Hopkins, T-Bone Walker and Blind Lemon Jefferson. What's my point, you ask? Well, besides the fact that I'm easily distracted (think about my poor TC Electronic Plethora X5 story), volumes upon volumes upon volumes could be written about the importance, influence and "cool factor" of Texas guitarists. I hope you enjoy this volume.

- Damian Fanelli (veteran of gigs in Austin & San Antonio in March 2005)



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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Damian Fanelli (damian.fanelli@futurenet.com) SENIOR MUSIC EDITOR Jimmy Brown TECH EDITOR Paul Riario ASSOCIATE EDITORS Chris Gill, Andy Aledort PRODUCTION EDITOR Jem Roberts MUSIC TRANSCRIPTIONIST AND ENGRAVER Jeff Perrin CONTRIBUTING WRITERS Gregory Adams, Jim Beaugez, Joe Bonamassa, Joe Bosso, Charlie Griffiths, Adam Kovac, Joe Matera, Jackson Maxwell, Mark McStea, David Mead, Joshua M. Miller, Alan Paul, Amit Sharma, Josh Smith, Andy Timmons

SENIOR DESIGN DIRECTOR Mixie von Bormann COVER ILLUSTRATION & TREATMENT Magictorch ADDITIONAL PAGE DESIGN/LAYOUT Damian Fanelli IMAGE MANIPULATION MANAGER Gary Stuckey

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HEAD OF NEWSTRADE Tim Mathers

HEAD OF PRODUCTION Mark Constance SENIOR AD PRODUCTION MANAGER Jo Crosby DIGITAL EDITIONS CONTROLLER Jason Hudson PRODUCTION MANAGER Vivienne Turner

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE Robert Dye 732-241-7437, robert.dye@futurenet.com ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE Jeff Donnenwerth 678-427-1535, jeff.donnenwerth@futurenet.com

CONSUMER MARKETING
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT Sheri Taubes

MANAGING DIRECTOR, MUSIC Stuart Williams GROUP EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Scott Rowley HEAD OF DESIGN (MUSIC) Brad Merrett

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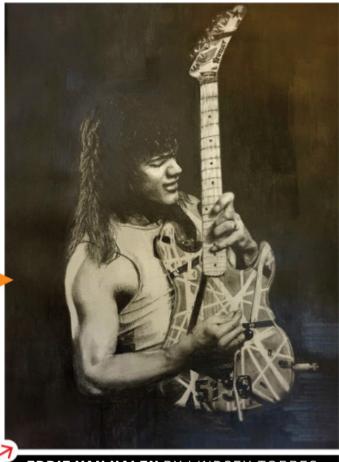
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READER **ART**

OF THE MONTH

If you've created a drawing, painting or sketch of your favorite guitarist and would like to see it in an upcoming issue of Guitar World, email **GWSoundingBoard@** futurenet.com with a scan of the image!

My wife frequently buys Guitar World to send me when I'm deployed. She also drew me this picture of King Edward for my birthday, which is today. It would be great to see her drawing in the mag. **—Tommy Torres**



EDDIE VAN HALEN BY LINDSEY TORRES



ACE FREHLEY BY MAURO CRUZ

To send us a letter via snail mail, write to Guitar World Sounding Board, Future, 347 W. 36th St., New York, NY 10018

DEFENDERS fof the Faith —



Christopher Jones

AGE: 47

HOMETOWN: Davidson, NC

GUITARS: Heritage 535, Fender American Pro II Telecaster, Cordoba C10, Bedell MB

17L-G (all lefty)

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Thelonious Monk "Ask Me Now," Sam Rivers "Beatrice," Merle Haggard "Ramblin Fever," Buck Owens "Buckaroo," Bach cello suites **GEAR I WANT MOST:** '65 Fender Deluxe Reverb reissue, Mesa/Boogie Fillmore 25, PRS solid body, Fender Am Pro II Strat



Don Hall

HOMETOWN: Circleville, OH

GUITARS: Yamaha 121D, Ibanez JEM 7V,

1959 USA Harmony Master

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Steely Dan "Pretzel Logic," the Dukes of September "Who's That Lady" and various arrange-

ments by Jon Herrington **GEAR I WANT MOST:** Egnater Tourmaster

amp, Pensa Suhr custom guitar



Dante Maas

HOMETOWN: Vernon, NJ **GUITARS:** ESP LTD KH-WZ, B.C. Rich

Platinum Series Warlock, Jackson Dinky JS32Q, Keith Urban Limited Edition Phoenix

Collection acoustic

SONGS I'VE BEEN PLAYING: Metallica "Fade to Black," Eagles "Hotel California,"

Stevie Ray Vaughan "Texas Flood," Fleetwood Mac "Landslide" and anything else rock 'n' roll

GEAR I WANT MOST: '52 Telecaster

and Gibson ES-335



Are you a Defender of the Faith? Send a photo, along with your answers to the questions above, to GWSoundingBoard@futurenet.com. And pray!



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TUNE-UPS

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MADISON CUNNINGHAM 26

Got Their Mojo Working

HOW GA-20'S MATTHEW STUBBS AND PAT FAHERTY CRACK DOWN ON THE SLICK, OVERPRODUCED SOUNDS OF MODERN COMMERCIAL BLUES

By Jim Beaugez

THERE'S NOTHING REVEALING about the band name GA-20 — unless you happen to be obsessed with Holy Grail vintage guitar tones like guitarists Matthew Stubbs and Pat Faherty, who founded the raw blues trio in 2018.

You read that correctly: Instead of merely referencing their favorite guitar tones from early electric blues and rock 'n' roll records, Stubbs and Faherty went all the way and named their band after the period-correct Gibson GA-20 amplifier — which Stubbs keeps front-and-center in his amp arsenal — as a statement of intent to avoid the slick, over-produced sounds of some commercial blues.

"I want to make classic-sounding records. I want them to be timeless," says Stubbs, seated next to Faherty, his foil in GA-20. "But," he adds, "there are things on those albums [from the Fifties and Sixties], sonically, that I always chase. And not just blues, but soul and jazz records, country records, old pop records."

Stubbs discovered his love for classic electric blues while growing up in New Hampshire, half a country away from the traditional blues alleys of the South as well as Chicago's South Side, where electrified blues came of



age. It wasn't a blues desert, though; players like Duke Robillard, who co-founded Roomful of Blues in 1967 and later took Jimmie Vaughan's spot in the Fabulous Thunderbirds, were regulars on the New England club circuit. Stubbs quickly graduated from Lenny Kravitz and Jimi Hendrix to Albert King, and "pretty much had blinders on" for the next decade as he absorbed and learned to play traditional blues.

Stubbs says the collaborative nature of Chicago blues is what spoke to him. "With Chicago blues, especially if it's ensemble playing, it's a band of musicians playing off of each other," he says. "It's not just a riff or a straight beat and then a guitar player going crazy. That Chicago stuff in the Fifties, I don't know if it gets more ensembleplaying than that."

Stubbs' syllabus, which included heaping doses of Chicago greats Little Walter and Hound Dog Taylor, prepared him to take over the guitar role in harmonicist Charlie Musselwhite's band 15 years ago. In addition to hearing Musselwhite's endless repertoire of stories about hanging with Muddy Waters, Magic Sam and Walter, he found himself in the role one of his idols would've played.

"There's a language that comes from Chicago blues of supporting the harmonica player," Stubbs says. "I played with a lot of harmonica players before him — I think that helped me get the gig — but it took me probably a year or two to really settle in and feel comfortable supporting him the way he wanted."

Through Musselwhite, Stubbs also shared the stage with blues legends like John Hammond and James Cotton. "It was a big moment for me, to be able to be all these different places and look over to my left, [and] James Cotton looks over at me [and] tells me to tweak his amp for him. I mean, it's James Cotton!"

Between tour breaks, Stubbs and



"I think the goal for me was to make a record that sounds like us - like a traditional blues record, but maybe a little bit fresher"

MATTHEW STUBBS

Faherty formed GA-20 in the aesthetic image of their blues forefathers and released their acclaimed debut album, Lonely Soul, in 2019. The band had already tracked the follow-up, Crackdown, when the pandemic hit, so they shelved the record. In the meantime, Alligator Records head Bruce Iglauter enlisted them to pay tribute to Hound Dog Taylor to honor the 50th anniversary of the late bluesman's debut record. GA-20 Does Hound Dog Taylor: Try It... You Might Like It! debuted atop the Billboard Blues Albums chart in September 2021.

As a power trio without a bassist, Stubbs and Faherty alternate covering the low and high ends of the sonic spectrum. On both Lonely Soul and Crackdown,

much of that work went down on Faherty's Harmony Stratatone. "The wood is very light — it's four and a half pounds — [and] the neck is like a baseball bat," he says. "It's one piece of wood, so you're getting all these tonal benefits where the notes aren't being choked, the tone's super fat and it resonates throughout the whole body. Pair this up with a good amp that sounds pretty clean, and vou've got some serious funk coming out at the low end."

At GA-20 live gigs, their roles are less defined. "It's a give and take," Stubbs says. "There's lots of songs where we weave. I might be playing the bottom, but I'm gonna take the solo. It took a little while to figure it out."

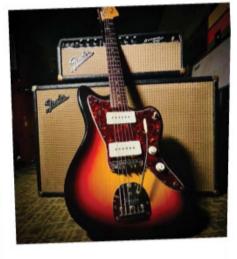
On Crackdown, the band has refined its retro-blues sound by easing the reins on genre lines and their own musical instincts. The influence of garage rock and traditional country music led to a well-rounded record without abandoning their core identity.

"[Crackdown] is not just Chicago blues, even though I think it's completely a blues record," Stubbs says. "I think the goal for me was to make a record that sounds like us — like a traditional blues record, but maybe a little bit fresher. We all listen to other music and we're living in 2022, so some other things are gonna slip in there."

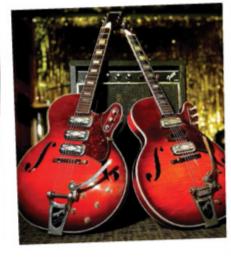


AXOLOGY

- MATTHEW 1960s Silvertone 1454 guitar, 1964 Fender Jazzmaster and/or Telecaster, 1965 Fender Vibrolux Reverb and a 1960 **GA-20**
- PAT 1950s Harmony Stratatone Newport, Modified Fender Jazzmaster, 1960s Teisco and reissued 1960s Telecaster, 1966 Fender Pro Reverb and a modified Fender Pro Junior with a 12-inch speaker











Soccer Mommy

HOP INTO SOPHIE ALLISON'S HONDA ODYSSEY AND LET HER CART YOU OFF TO A BETTER PLACE

By Joshua M. Miller

EVER SINCE SHE was a tyke, 25-yearold Nashvillian Sophie Allison — better known as indie rock/pop-rocker Soccer Mommy — has found guitar to be the key to unlocking inspiration. She remembers falling in love with the guitar at a show at her brother's preschool, then receiving a "crappy nylon-string guitar" and "banging on it until my parents got me a small acoustic I could take lessons on." She hasn't looked back since, continuing to improve her skills over the years - and the albums.

With each new record, Allison keeps pushing herself further out of her comfort zone - a zone fueled by her love of everything from Taylor Swift and Avril Lavigne to the Smiths and the Cure. That drive for discovery continues on Soccer Mommy's third effort, Sometimes, Forever, which was produced by Daniel Lopatin, aka Oneohtrix Point Never, who ensured that the guitars played by Allison and bandmates Julian Powell and Rodrigo Avendano - stayed front and center.

"Dan was really excited about getting cool, atmospheric and shoegazey guitar parts," Allison says. "[The album] has a lot of stuff that seems familiar to people who already like our music, but also it has a lot of stuff that's new and exciting and pushes outside of some genre boundaries."

When it comes to writing new music, Allison says the guitar is key. "Writing the guitar parts always comes first for me because that's how I build melodies," she says. "I could never write a song without a guitar." She's always looking for interesting



 GUITARS Custom-made Novo, '94 Fender Custom Shop Strat, Fender Jaguar, Gibson LG-1 (Allison); Gibson Les Paul (Julian); Jazzmaster, Danelectro 12-string (Ron) AMSS Roland Jazz Chorus, Silvertone, **Fender Princeton**

chords to play. Jazz chords especially interest her, as they allow her to get "a bit more creative and get some interesting sounds."

"I feel it drives the music I write because I want to be able to have a song that has good lyrics and a catchy melody and everything," she says. "But the thing I always start with is chord progressions, and that's kind of what inspires me to write a song."

She's also been known to mess around with an alternate tuning or two. For example, she used a D#FCFGC tuning for the first time on "Following Eyes," noting that "it was cool to create something fairly quickly from it without knowing the neck in that tuning very well."

A variety of guitars were used to achieve Sometimes, Forever's unique sounds. The pickups in her Novo are well voiced for her riff-driven, shoegazey power chords, while her Strat provides a brighter sound that's "a bit cleaner and less gritty." Her Fender Jaguar gives her a "fatter, darker sound" on the aforementioned "Following Eyes." "It gives it kind of a beefiness when I'm playing," she says. "I'm playing a riff on that song mostly, rather than chords, and it has a nice heaviness to it."

I love the unexpected turns and how Steve builds the arrangement. There's so much variety in his playing. He's a great guitar player, sure... but he's way underrated as a producer.

"Star Cycle"

We just added this cover to our set and it's a blast to play. Jeff Beck and Jan Hammer — what a great combo. I really dig the Eighties vibe that pre-dates Jan's Miami Vice heyday.



Ennio Morricone

"Once Upon a Time in the West"

Amazing composer. The sweep and romanticism here is almost too much. A perfect marriage with Leone's film. I've been listening to a lot of retro stuff lately. I bet this is on Quentin Tarantino's desert island playlist.



The Dregs

"Assembly Line"

Steve Morse has always been one of my heroes. This tune packs so much into its short running time, and the interplay between the band is top notch.

THE DELUXE EDITION OF CRAZY SWEDES SELF-TITLED 2021 DEBUT ALBUM IS OUT NOW.

Crobot

THE PENNSYLVANIA HARD ROCKERS' LATEST RECORD IS A CELEBRATION OF STRAIGHT-UP, FAT-FREE RIFFERY

By Gregory Adams

CHRIS BISHOP HAS an eye for the iconic. When he's not touring with hard rockers Crobot, the Austin-based musician is inking bodies at a local tattoo shop with an assortment of classically gnarly grim reapers, skull-concealing florae and even his band's own cursive-script logo — at least when the customer in the chair is aware of his high-voltage riffing.

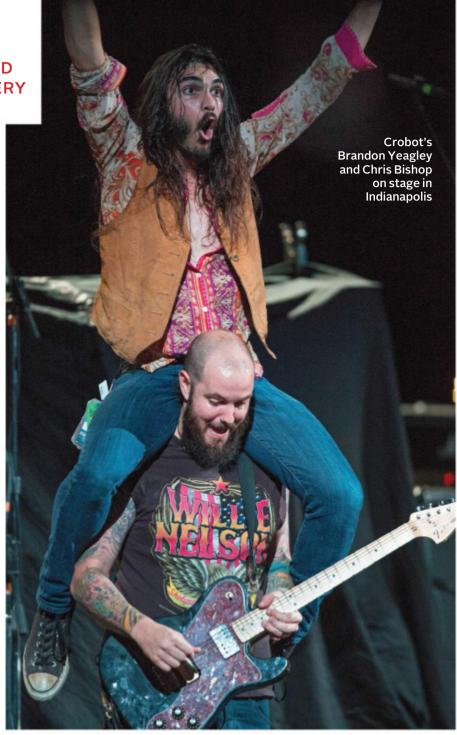
"I'll mention that I'm in a band, and they'll be like, 'Oh I think I've heard of you guys," Bishops says. "Then they look up [Crobot], and they'll know 'Low Life.' That's our 'Cherry Pie,' you know?"

Like Warrant's early Nineties hair metal hit, Crobot's anthemically chunky "Low Life," off 2019's Motherbrain, has racked up millions of listens on streaming services. The comparison is just as sweet when it comes to the cover art for Crobot's latest release, Feel This, which presents an ice cream cone being held by someone sporting a pair of brass knuckles. It's an apt visual metaphor for Crobot's fourth full-length release, which merges some of the group's most hook-loaded choruses with Bishop and new bassist Tim Peugh's penchant for unified, dirt-nasty, chromatic grooving.

"Before, there'd be times I would pride myself on 'I only play single notes the entire song,' because I thought that was cool," Bishop says of a previously chord-sparing approach, a by-product of his love of bands like Clutch. "Now there's a little more diversity, which can make for better songs. And it makes it easier for [vocalist] Brandon [Yeagley] to sing."

Crobot remain a hard-sweatin' quartet giving their all on tour. With "Livin' on the Streets" — a motor-revvin' rip through the back alleys of the Sunset Strip, circa 1981 — Bishop was stoked to add to the road-worn canon of "rock songs about rockin'."

"It's about us living on the streets, being in a band. We sleep in our van," Bishop says. "That's our home away from home. A lot of times we don't have a green room, so we're thankful to have it."





INTRODUCING



Rumble of Thunder (Better Noise Music) **SOUND** The Hu — who hail from Mongolia mix traditional native folk instrumentation with bruising metal, creating darkly atmospheric music, suggesting epic mythological battles across fantastical landscapes. The fact that they don't sing in English is immaterial, as the sound of the vocal conveys maximum intensity while demolishing all language barriers. **KEY TRACK** "This Is Mongol"



Erja Lyytinen

Waiting for the Daylight (Tuohi Records) **SOUND** Lyytinen — a Finnish blues guitarist who mixes blazing slide lines, furious, shredworthy blues/rock stylings and superlative vocals — is the complete package. Her songs eschew tired old tropes and update the genre for modern tastes while appealing to traditional roots audiences and modern commercial rock radio.

KEY TRACK "Bad Seed"



Bed

Bed (Wiretap Records)

SOUND A Californian band who have cleverly taken elements of shoegaze and allied them to a harder-hitting sound that has enabled them to carve out their own niche. Chugging rhythms and massively delayed guitar melodies weave engagingly hypnotic textures around memorable songs, managing the neat trick of combining instant familiarity with striking originality.

KEY TRACK "Blue Sweater"

— Mark McStea

NTRODUCING (FROM



Dead Cross

MICHAEL CRAIN AND JUSTIN PEARSON TAKE YOU DEEP INSIDE THE HARDCORE PUNK SUPERGROUP'S LATEST RABID EFFORT, II

By Gregory Adams

MAKING DEAD CROSS' sophomore album, II, was grueling for Michael Crain, but not because of the music. In the case of high-velocity nailbombs like "Reign of Error," the guitarist barnstormed through a basic thrash structure the night before cutting it with bassist Justin Pearson (the Locust, Deaf Club) and former Slayer skinsman Dave Lombardo (Mr. Bungle's Mike Patton added vocals later). Back when they began recording at the end of 2019, though, Crain was also enduring the painful process of fighting an advanced cancer diagnosis with rounds of radiation and chemotherapy.



AXOLOGY

- **GUITARS/BASSES** 1976 and '77 Gibson SG with custom HomeWrecker pickups (Crain); Ampeg Dan Armstrong (Pearson) • AMPS Bogner Uberschall Twin Jet, vintage EVH 5150 (Crain); Ampeg SVT
- EFFECTS MXR Carbon Copy, Ricochet, EarthQuaker Organizer, Dunlop Cry Baby (Crain); Boss DD-20 Overdrive/Distortion, Line 6 FM4, MXR Sub Octave Bass Fuzz. EarthQuaker Devices Disaster Transport, EarthQuaker Bit Commander (Pearson)

"There was a good window of time when I honestly wasn't sure I was going to survive," Crain recalls, though fortunately his cancer has since gone into remission. "I remember this vividly — in that whole blur of nausea, fear and uncertainty,

I was like, 'Fuck this, I'm not going to die from this stupid shit; I want to make music with my friends.' I'm not saying I willed myself to survive, but I do believe there's a part of the human spirit that you can't discount."

Like Dead Cross' 2017 self-titled debut, II's "Reign of Error" and "Heart Reformer" determinedly drill into vintage crossover intensity. But the sequel also features a more pronounced dynamism via Crain's penchant for echo-splayed minimalism ("Love Without Love") and eerily melodic texturing — something he'd previously honed alongside Pearson in their Retox

"He does have this weird, surfy, [Dead Kennedys'] East Bay Ray vibe," Pearson says of Crain's aesthetic, the bassist adding of

"I'm not saying I willed myself to survive, but I do believe there's a part of the human spirit that you can't discount" **DEAD CROSS**

MICHAEL CRAIN

how he contrasts this with extraugly fuzz, "I think it's rad to go, 'Alright, you have this really killer, smooth, cruising riff; let me just give it the grit and the fuckin' nasty

meanness underneath."

Despite Crain's incandescent waveriding — whether working delay pedals or an old Boss flanger the Cure's Robert Smith had left with II producer Ross Robinson in the early '00s — the guitarist still gets out his aggression on the album, most particularly through the wildly wah-pressed leads on "Christian Missile Crisis" and "Night Canary."

"With any of our other bands, a solo would almost be unwarranted; it'd be silly. But for a thrash-related project, it screams for it," Crain says. And as for the old Dunlop Cry Baby wahs he dusted off for Dead Cross, "Ross was like, 'Dude, let's get those fuckers out; let's get all Kirk Hammett on this shit.' It's fun to get to play like that once in a while," Crain says.

PHIL MANZANERA

THE LONGTIME ROXY MUSIC GUITARIST TALKS OBSCURE GEAR, EARLY GIGS AND EMBARRASSING ON-STAGE MOMENTS

What was your first guitar? It was a Cuban guitar my mother bought to teach herself to play in Havana, Cuba, in 1957. It's a beautiful little nylonstring guitar that has travelled with me my whole life — and I've also used it on records. I was about seven and because I kept wanting to touch it, she ended up teaching me how to play some "acompañamiento," which means a style of playing that goes "under" songs, and that's how I started playing. Later when I was 10, I was given £5 as a birthday present by my parents and I used it as the deposit for a red Hofner Galaxie, which I still have.

What were the first songs you learned to play?

Cuban and Latin songs, what they call evergreen songs, which are still played today in the Spanish-speaking world. The songs had nothing to do with rock, as it was mainly music from South America. The first song I learned from start to finish was "Cielito Lindo." When I lived in Venezuela, a British boy showed me how to play R&B like Chuck Berry and that was it. I was converted to rock 'n' roll and begged my parents to send me to London. I was 9!

Do you remember the first gig you ever played?

I had been sent to a boarding school in South London, and with some other friends at the school we formed a band with this crazy name — the Drag Alley Beach mob. We were about 12 and played on a stage in the school's music room.

Ever have an embarrassing moment on stage?

There've been many hairy moments when your equipment isn't working at crucial points where you could be at the mercy of a lead or a wireless system that just doesn't work. One time, I was playing in Seville at a thing called Guitar Legends in 1991. I was the musical director and had chosen the best guitarists in the world, and we were playing outdoors and all these famous people were there. I was doing my own little set and half way through it, when there was a gap, and where I was supposed to come in with a new number, it suddenly stopped working. And this was being broadcast live on TV in America and all over the world! I thought, 'Oh my God, what am I going to do?' Luckily, I had the Miami Horns with me, so they just improvised while the guys fixed my gear. It was the scariest moment in my career. And it's happened quite a few times.



What's your favorite piece of gear?

I love echo units. The cheapest one you could buy in the Sixties was a WEM/Watkins Copicat [Tape Delay]. If you're not technically brilliant, with all the repeats, it can make you do incredible things. Also, I enjoyed early Pink Floyd, so I was a big fan of using weird effects and echos. When we started Roxy Music, [Brian] Eno and I had — as part of our setups — a Revox tape recorder that had a thing called Sel-Synch and Varipitch where you could change the pitch and echo repeats by changing the speed. I had it linked to a DeArmond volume pedal that controlled the speed and Sel-Synch functions on the Revox and provided weird echo effects that linked into Eno's [EMS VCS3] synth. This was a completely different and revolutionary way of working that Eno and I used in 1972 and 1973.

What is your proudest moment on any of the Roxy Music albums?

The solo at the end of "Ladytron" and "In

Every Dream Home a Heartache" because I get to wig out a bit more on those. Most of the time I'm serving the song since Roxy is song-based. I'd come up with these melodic little parts, the George Harrison approach, that would go really well with the song and the vocals.

Looking back on your career, do you have any regrets on anything you've done musically?

I've done about 80 albums in 50 years, not only my own but also producing and playing on other people's albums, and obviously there are some things that I think I did better than others. But you do your best each time and some win through and some don't. But my main philosophy of wanting to enjoy guitaring for a whole lifetime has played out quite well, where I've used it as a means to meet people and have fun. And also recognizing the therapeutic value of music and that you can contribute something not only to people's happiness but to your own mental health.

– Joe Matera

POWERTRIO

WELCOME TO THE NEXT GENERATION KEELEY ENGINEERING









Candlemass

AFTER DECADES OF TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS, THE FIRE BENEATH THESE SWEDISH DEATH METAL GODS BURNS BRIGHTER THAN EVER

By Adam Kovac

relationship, Candlemass has had a bumpier ride than all the Kardashians combined. Over the course of almost 40 years, the Swedish doom metal gods have gone through half a dozen vocalists and broken up and reunited twice. But the last few years have seen the quintet reach a level of peace that is completely at odds with the furious noise that has made them a fan favorite across the globe.

"Well, we've been around for a while, and there's been a change of vocalists here and there. The guitars, bass and drums have not changed, so the sound still remains," says lead guitarist Lars Johansson.

According to bassist Leif Edling, it was the return of vocalist Johan Langqvist, who originally had a short mid-Eighties stint with Candlemass, that brought on this new era of stability.

"It's been the four of us for a long time now," Edling says. "We know each other



inside out, we know what we can do and what we can't, so we're incredibly stable. And now that Johan is back, we have the best solid lineup we've ever had! We have had so many ups and downs as a band during these 35-plus years; we've always been able to come back, no matter how impos-

"You just can't kill us! We're the cockroaches of epic doom metal! We will never go away!"

- LEIF EDLING

sible it has looked. You just can't kill us! We're the cockroaches of epic doom metal! We will never go away!"

On their new album, *Sweet Evil Sun*, Candlemass prove they're just as vital as ever. Lead single "Scandinavian Gods" sets the tone, opening with a minor key riff so evil that even Satan might ask them to tone it down a notch. It harkens back to some of the band's earliest albums from the Eighties, a renewed freshness that Johansson credits to Edling's songwriting skills.

"I can only believe that that's the only and main mindset that's been essential to the sound of this band, and that is one of Leif's strong sides," Johansson says.

For Edling's part, the loquacious bassist notes that while the new album might sound dark and gloomy, there's a deliberate juxtaposition with surprisingly positive

and uplifting lyrics. For inspiration, he looked to the political situation in the band's home country, where the far-right anti-immigrant party Sweden Democrats saw a stunning leap in popularity in the leadup to the country's recent election.

"Everything just can't be dark and ominous all the time. It has to be a little light in the dark somewhere, sometime," he says. "It doesn't feel like this, especially today when the right wing seems to have taken over Sweden in this election, but we can't give up. Darkness will always be there, lurking, looking for a weak spot and it's our duty to fight insanity, stupidity and all the dark waves that splash up on our shores whenever we can."

To fight a battle of such importance, you need proper weapons. To that end, Johansson had a variety of SG-type guitars at the ready, as well as a few Strats.

"I try to keep it simple and easy to work with and easy to travel with," he says of his preferred gear. "A massive rhythm sound and a cool solo sound, with some echo and/ or reverb and a wah here and there does the trick for me. And, of course, I experiment with new and different gear, but I often end up with a handful of things I use."

Those pieces of gear that made it onto the album were put through their paces: all told. Sweet Evil Sun took 18 months to write and record. The process was so arduous that Edling says he came down with chronic fatigue syndrome, leaving him unable to come into the studio more than three times a week while the band was in the demoing stage — and the band had to still properly track and mix the record, which took another six months.

"I wish that those six months could be the entire process from idea to finished album," Edler says. "But my burned-out brain doesn't work that way. Can't do it faster. But I work in my head for 18 months, even if I'm not in the studio all the time. Even if I'm tired as fuck, I write riffs on my guitar while in bed, think about melody lines, vocals, arrangements. And next time in the studio, I'm prepared."

Johansson strikes a more philosophical tone. All that time gave the band an opportunity to look at the world and the destruction and despair that seems so rampant these days. Taking that darkness and making a piece of art may have taken a toll on Edler, but the band is sure that the effort and torment was worth it.

"Through Covid and all this crap that's going on in the world, there was a lot to think about, and even making a heavier album than the last one," Johansson says. "I mean, making the songs, doing demos, it's nothing to rush through if you want good results."

TUNE-UPS NEWS+NOTES

Fallujah

SCOTT CARSTAIRS AMPS UP THE AGGRESSION FOR EMPYREAN, WHICH TAPS INTO THE SPIRIT OF "AN EXCITED 17-YEAR-OLD WHO KNOWS **HOW TO PLAY GUITAR"**

By Gregory Adams

WHEN PANDEMIC LOCKDOWNS pushed Bay Area-formed tech-metal veterans Fallujah off the road, it also pushed guitarist Scott Carstairs into an existential, career-questioning tailspin. To cope, the musician turned his attention to a different kind of tech — namely, the Twitch platform. After creating a profile, Carstairs began livestreaming riff workshops and Q&A's a few times a week, connecting with fans on an intimate level he'd never before experienced online. Part of that, he'd argue, was survival instinct.

"I posted stuff [in the past] because it was a requirement to being in a band — you have to be on social media — but now this is going to be my lifeline. I have nothing else," the Fallujah founder recalls of developing his Twitch base in 2020. "I just have this computer, this apartment and this shutdown-ass city. What else am I supposed to do?"

An adaptive mentality is likewise found in "The Bitter Taste of Clarity," the ferocious leadoff track from Fallujah's fifth full-length, Empyrean. Thematically, it's about "realizing you're in a downward spiral, [but] it's time to head out of this place and put in the work to change." In terms of Carstairs' playing, the blast-intensive opener finds him working a feverish fretboard immediacy that stands in stark contrast to the ambient, blackgaze tonality he brought to Fallujah's fan-divisive 2019 release, *Undying Light*. While Carstairs loved the wide-open vibe of *Undying Light*, he reveled in amping up the aggression for *Empyrean*, which taps into the spirit of "an excited 17-year-old who knows how to play guitar."



AXOLOGY

- GUITARS Kiesel SC7X with signature Kiesel Empyrean pickups
- AMPS Kemper Profile taken from a Diesel Herbert and a 5150 III EL34
- EFFECTS Hall reverb, slow chorus and some delay



"I feel like that's the only way to improve: really intense, difficult shit"

SCOTT CARSTAIRS

Fallujah's lineup also morphed between releases, with former the Faceless bassist Evan Brewer now popping brutally funkedup, progressive rhythms into Carstairs' arrangements ("I've called him the G.O.A.T. of metal bass playing for years"). Gearwise, Carstairs was recording with his new signature Kiesel SC7X, which has his screaming, newly developed Empyrean pickup in the neck position. "If you're into that Eighties shred with lots of legato, [the Empyrean pickup's really versatile and dvnamic."

Fittingly, Carstairs pushes his soloing to the extreme on Empyrean's "Radiant Ascension," which surges with chaotic melodicism, mid-arpeggio key changes, and frenetic, tap-augmented sweeps. "This is the hardest solo I've ever had to perform," he confirms, adding of his current path with Fallujah, "I was trying to make a point with that [solo]. Like a 'fuck you, look at us' kind of thing. But it's also something that scared the shit out of me. I feel like that's the only way to improve: really intense, difficult shit."



Madison Cunningham

THE SINGER-SONGWRITER **EXPLORES MIND-BENDING** TONES AND RHYTHMS ON HER LATEST ALBUM, REVEALER

By Jim Beaugez

EARNING GRAMMY NOMINATIONS for her 2019 debut, Who Are You Now, and its 2020 follow-up EP, Wednesday, has done nothing to deter Madison Cunningham from her path of creating adventurous, fractured, guitar-driven pop songs. And her new album, Revealer, contains some of the most fearless guitar playing and tones you'll hear today.

Combining the polyrhythmic tendencies of Radiohead and Fiona Apple with the melodic instincts of Jeff Buckley and Aimee Mann, Cunningham's music is often a dance between her divergent guitar and vocal lines. That marriage is no accident, as she explains.

"I like to view the guitar and vocal as kind of a duo, but also as two living melodies that can also counter each other in a complementary way," she says. "I really like



- GUITARS Fender Jazzmaster, Harmony Juno, Reuben Cox custom
- AMP Fender Deluxe Reverb

the conversation between those two things and try to be intentional about that."

Cunningham's sonic experiments are all over Revealer, and it's no wonder she wrote a lot of the album on a custom-modded guitar by Reuben Cox that features his signature, tone-dampening rubber bridge. Its unmistakable tone, which pops up throughout the album, set the stage for the songs that became Revealer. On "Your Hate Could Power a Train," her experiments led her to use a detuned ukulele run through an octave pedal — the same pedal she used on "Hospital," which gave her guitar a "crazy kind of crackle sound, a really weird digitized feeling."

Her guitar foundation, however, both live and in the studio, looks more traditional. She typically gravitates to one of her Fender Jazzmasters and plugs into a Fender Deluxe Reverb. On the road, she's also using a pedal board outfitted with JHS

"I like to view the guitar and vocal as kind of a duo, but also as two living melodies that can also counter each other in a complementary way"

distortion, vibrato, slap delay and boost stomp boxes, as well as an octaver/ harmonizer. But that's just the end of the process, and she's on board for the whole journey.

"My favorite part of the whole process is just sitting down and letting myself head in any direction and see how it pans out, and that's truly how I've stumbled across tones over the years," she says. "It's all very much by the seat of my pants — just trying to figure out what feels right day by day, because tones and ideas change from room to room or from record to record."

QUOTABLE



"In a way, I feel very cared about — people are so protective of me and my career that they want to weigh in on my decisions. [Laughs] If people didn't care, they wouldn't say anything. I'm choosing to look at the bright side of things. I'm very excited about the opportunity. I haven't been to Brazil to play a gig since 2017. I can't wait to crush these shows. "And it's not just about me, it's an amazing all-female band: **Brittany Bowman** on the drums, **Leanne Bowes** on the bass, **Dani McGinley** on the keys. If we can reach this next generation of passionate and intense fans, and inspire them to play music, isn't that a wonderful thing? They might pick up a guitar or bass, try out drums or see Dani on keys and think, 'I could do that!' Some of these younger fans might not have been reached through a traditional rock show."

— Amit Sharma



MARINO: MICHAREL

guitarist? Probably because I wasn't a very good blues guitarist. The thing is, a lot of young players and some established players have said to me, 'I only wanted to be like Clapton.' They didn't say it, but you knew it. That wasn't my aim. Stunning player, but... The question eventually became formulated for me as, 'What would Hendrix sound like playing the Bartók String Quartets?' "In 1969 the major musical influences in [King] Crimson were **lan McDonald** and Michael Giles. I recognized they had a connection with music, which at the time I didn't have, but I could recognize in others. I'd known this probably since I was 17 or 18 working alongside and going to see the other young players in Bournemouth, stunning young players."

— David Mead

FROM THE GW ARCHIVES



RESULTS OF THE 1991 GW READER'S POLL

> MOST VALUABLE PLAYER EDDIE VAN HALEN



BEST ROCK GUITARIST EDDIE VAN HALEN

BEST ROCK GUITAR RECORD VAN HALEN

For Unlawful Carnal Knowledge

BEST NEW TALENT

ERIC GALES

BEST HEAVY METAL GUITARIST KIRK HAMMETT

BEST HEAVY METAL GUITAR RECORD

METALLICA Metallica



BEST BLUES GUITARIST STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN

BEST BLUES GUITAR RECORD

JOHN LEE HOOKER Mr. Lucky

BEST ALTERNATIVE GUITARIST

DAVE NAVARRO

BEST ALTERNATIVE GUITAR RECORD

NIRVANA Nevermind

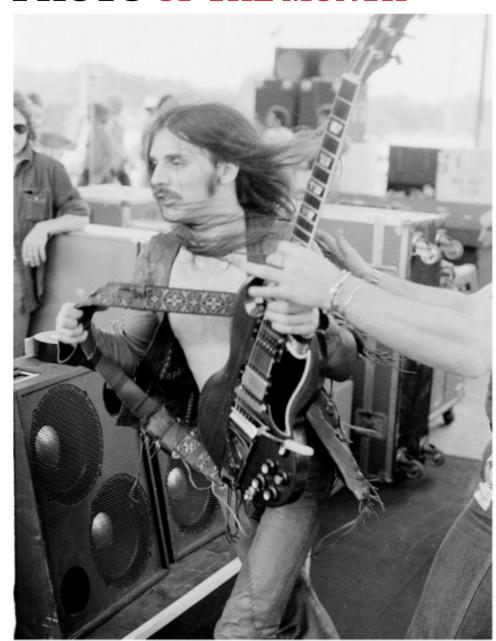
BEST BASSIST

BILLY SHEEHAN

BEST GUITAR SOLO

ZAKK WYLDE
"No More Tears"
FROM THE MARCH 1992 ISSUE

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Mahogany Rush's Frank Marino changes guitars in the middle of a show in Florida in 1979

•

YOUTUBE GIANT RICK BEATO'S SIGNATURE DOUBLE-CUT GIBSON LES PAUL HAS FINALLY ARRIVED...

Envisioned as a combination of two of Beato's favorite guitars — a TV Yellow double-cut Special and a Pelham Blue Les Paul Standard — the Rick Beato Les Paul Special Double Cut features a mahogany body that's been thinned out. All told, it weighs in at a slim 7.2 pounds. — *Jackson Maxwell*





1 O COOL AXES THAT VEER FROM THE TRADITIONAL TO THE CURVY AND OBLIQUE BY AMIT SHARMA

N OFFSET GUITAR can look like so many different things. As any Jaguar, Firebird or Iceman aficionado will happily tell you, the term lends itself to the "waist" of an instrument rather than its overall shape or cutaways, specifically referring to how its lower half is asymmetrical, tilted or angled. Which, at least at first glance, is what makes these distinguished guitars really pop. To some, such guitars might seem futuristic; to others, they might look like ancient remnants of a long-distant past. Regardless of your take, one thing's for certain: Instruments of this ilk never fail to leave a long-lasting impression.

Asymmetrical six-strings are undoubtedly an area of great expertise for Fender, who released the Jazzmaster way back in 1958 as their answer to the thicker and darker tones belop guitarists were dialing in through their Gibsons. Its distinct body shape also afforded a comfortable playing experience while sitting down, as guitarists of that ilk often would be.

And yet, despite its name, the Jazzmaster would end up finding popularity well outside of its intended market, initially with treble-driven surf rock musicians, and then the post-punk, Britrock and alternative movements that followed, eventually becoming the instrument of choice for all kinds of thrill-seekers and non-conformists. Then, of course, there are the other Fender innovations like the Jaguar, Mustang and Duo-Sonic, each of which presents its own unique sense of charm and take on tone.

That's just scratching the surface. There's been many a cult classic produced by other companies too, from the Gibson Firebird and the Ghostapproved Gibson RD to the Paul Stanley-affiliated Ibanez Iceman, which, in turn, helped inspire Meshuggah's eight-string Stoneman and Paul Gilbert's reversed Fireman. In more recent years, offsets have become big business for all kinds of brands, with some truly remarkable models coming from the likes of Ernie Ball Music Man, PRS and Reverend, including signatures co-designed by alternative guitar heroes like Omar Rodríguez-López and Billy Corgan. Here's a closer look at 10 of our favorites that are available right now.

ERNIE BALL MUSIC MAN

MARIPOSA SAHARA SUNSET

\$3,099, music-man.com

Named after the Spanish word for butterfly, the Mariposa made its debut in 2019 as the new signature instrument for Omar Rodríguez-López, whose music in At the Drive-In and the Mars Volta ended up defining an era of post-hardcore and modern shoegaze. This latest edition in Sahara Sunset could be our favorite yet, with its orangey glow complimented by the custom floral pickguard and gold hardware, pairing a lightweight okoume body with a roasted maple neck and ebony fingerboard. While he's known using for sophisticated rigs and elaborate pedalboards to venture way beyond the typical confines of guitar noise, his instrument of choice is actually a rather classic affair — with a three-way selector controlling two custom-voiced and high-output EBMM humbuckers, as well as two volume controls. It's the perfect workhorse to get writing your own "One Armed Scissor," "Concertina" and "Roulette Dares (The Haunt Of)."

SQUIER

ever made.

40TH ANNIVERSARY JAZZMASTER, GOLD EDITION

\$599, fender.com

Though the roots of Squier can be traced as far back as 1890, long before it was acquired by Fender in 1965, this year's 40th Anniversary range are actually in recognition of the brand's re-launch in 1982 as the Big F's then Japanese-made answer to affordability, designed to compete with the influx of copycat guitars produced in the Far East. The Jazzmaster is particularly alluring, we'd like to think, with its gold-plated hardware, gold anodized aluminum pickguard and pearloid block inlays standing out against the eyecatching dual Alnico 5 single-coils. There's also an engraved anniversary neck plate, just to reemphasize the history, lineage and sense of occasion behind this year's limited run. Available in two elegant and dazzling finishes, Olympic White and Lake Placid Blue, it's up there with the most impressive budget Jazzmasters

name, the
Jazzmaster
would end
up finding
popularity
well outside
of its
intended
market

Despite its

GIBSON

FIREBIRD TOBACCO BURST

\$1,999, gibson.com

Though it may not be as deeply ingrained into rock 'n' roll history as the storied Les Paul or SG, the reversebodied Firebird still packs some serious credentials, having been famously played by the likes of Johnny Winter, Phil Manzanera of Roxy Music and even Eric Clapton. Joe Bonamassa owns a few, naturally, including the 1963 original his Epiphone "Treasure" signatures were based on. As Gibson's first neck-through-body design, there's a lot to be said for how they sustain — the mahogany body and 9-ply mahogany/walnut neck of the current models pairing up to bring no shortage of acoustic resonance, articulated immaculately through the Firebird Alnico V Rhythm and Lead mini humbuckers. It's available in two very popular finishes, Cherry Red and Tobacco Burst, the latter of which standing — at least in our eyes — as one of the most visually striking instruments in Gibson history.



DUESENBERG

PALOMA

\$3,347, duesenberg.de

Though they're admittedly one of the lesser-known manufacturers on this list, Duesenberg's German-built guitars have been seen in the hands of some incredibly famous musicians over the years: from Ronnie Wood, Bob Dylan and Billy Gibbons to John Mayer and Carmen Vandenberg. Then there's Chris Cornell, Joe Walsh, Doyle Bramhall II, Elvis Costello... you get the idea. They make good guitars, which is why good guitarists use them. The beautifully curved Paloma is a truly state of the art and deluxe take on an offset — with personality and character in abundance. The alder body is stylishly contoured and there are three pickups — an Alnico Blade single-coil in the neck, a Pearlito single-coil in the middle and a GrandVintage humbucker in the bridge — providing a broad spectrum of sounds via the four-way selector. And there's plenty of choice when it comes to color schemes with an impressive total of six finishes available, including a mouth-water-

ing Narvik Blue and a head-turning Red Sparkle.

PRS

S2 VELA SEMI-HOLLOW SATIN

\$1,829, prsguitars.com

Announced in 2015, the S2 Vela quickly stole headlines for being PRS's first-ever offset design — the S2 line having been launched two years prior as the company's more affordable American-made range. In 2019, the Vela series was expanded even further with the addition of a single f-hole semi-hollow model, taking those vintage influences to more extreme limits. Available in four finishes with a mahogany body and neck, the guitars feature a Type-D single-coil in the neck and a DS-o1 humbucker in the bridge, which can be split via the push/pull tone control. The two-saddle plate-style bridge is said to be a throwback to Paul Reed Smith's earliest designs and adds to the charm of a guitar that wouldn't look out of place with a country band or even in the hands of higher-gain hard rock acts.



In 2015, the S2 Vela stole headlines for being PRS's first-ever offset design. In 2019, the Vela series was expanded even further



S-200 T-BIRD

\$899, guildguitars.com

It would be fair to say Guild are known for their acoustics, first and foremost. But their electrics have made history too, from Muddy Waters rocking the S-200 T-Bird in the mid Sixties to

Dan Auerbach from the Black Keys bringing that same guitar back into popularity many decades later — not forgetting Kim Thayil's legendary work with an S-100 in the late Eighties and Nineties, through which Soundgarden redefined the very meaning of rock. Relaunched in 2016, the modern T-Birds are a faithful Korean-manufactured reproduction of the originals made between 1964 and 1968 and live up to the company's promise of carrying "the widest variety of tones offered on any Guild instrument" thanks to the pair of LB-1 Little Bucker dual-coils and the elaborate switching system. Balancing a mahogany body and neck with a pau ferro fingerboard, as well as a Guild Tune-O-Matic bridge and Hagstrom Vintage Tremolo, it's every bit the high-flying bird that wowed players and audiences alike in the mid Sixties.

FENDER

VINTERA SERIES '60S JAGUAR MODIFIED

\$1,379, fender.com

Launched in 2019, the Vintera series took over from the Mexican-made Classic line, providing the original specs and vintage colors of yesteryear at a more affordable price point. For each and every instrument in the range, there's a counterpart "modified" sibling, offering features that were not available on the original models — tailored to those requiring an old favorite with an updated, contemporary feel. This modded Jaguar carries two Atomic humbuckers that pack considerably more punch than the single-coils found in the standard Vintera Jaguar, a flatter 9.5" radius instead of 7.25" and medium jumbo frets in place of the skinnier period-correct vintage ones. Other notable features include a tone cut switch, a master kill switch and single-coil/humbucking blend controls for each pickup - which makes it

one of the most tonally

could ever hope to find.

versatile offsets you

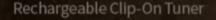
D'ANGELICO

PREMIER BEDFORD \$849, dangelicoguitars.com As playable as they are affordable, the Indonesian-made D'Angelico guitars like the Premier Bedford are faithful reproductions of the high-end customs manufactured in their New York workshop, which carry more than a whiff of an Art Deco influence in their design. Their instantly recognizable truss rod cover, for example, depicts a skyscraper, while the Grover 109 Super Rotomatic tuners are equally as evocative of the Empire State Building or Big Apple skyline. And the tones are just as classy as the looks — two Duncan Designed P9os with cream covers cooking up a perfect blend of warmth and articulation. The Black Flake and Oxblood finishes come with a basswood body, though for our money it's the mahogany-bodied model in Sky Blue that will continually demand attention and beg to be played every time you pass by.

Genuine PRS Parts & Accessories









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BEGGIA WORLD FOR STITAL WORLD STALLY'S MÅN

AS THERE BEEN A ROCK BAND FROM anywhere that has completely killed it like Måneskin during the past two years? Since winning the prestigious Eurovision Song Contest in May 2021 with their golden riff-raprock blaster "Zitti e Buoni," the young and impossibly charismatic Italian foursome has become a worldwide sensation, dominating radio and streaming charts with a steady stream of knockout singles.

There was the rip-roaring raunch-o-rama "I Wanna Be Your Slave," followed by the slinky, sexy and altogether hooky "Supermodel." But perhaps their biggest — and most improbable — smash so far was their cover of "Beggin'." A minor hit by the Four Seasons in 1967, Måneskin included their revvedup, emotionally charged funk-rock version of the song on their 2017 EP, *Chosen*. Finally released as a single last year, it became a global favorite and got to within inches of *Billboard's* hallowed Top 10 (almost unheard of in these times for a rock band).

All of which begs the question: How did an Italian rock band manage to do what no other group from their country has ever done before? According to guitarist Thomas Raggi, who formed Måneskin with bassist Victoria De Angelis and singer Damiano David in Rome in 2016, the plan was always the same — to have no plan at all. "We don't really overthink what we do," he says. "We've always tried to be very true to our instincts and just do what we like. I think once people saw us and heard us, they realized we were simply being ourselves and enjoying what we do."

For her part, De Angelis agrees. "I think other bands try too hard to do what the industry tells them, but fans can tell it's fake," she says. "If we were to even try to go that way, we would know right away we weren't being genuine. It wouldn't be satisfying to do what you don't believe in, so we don't do it."

Thus far, Måneskin have released two full-length albums, 2018's *Il ballo della vita* and last year's *Teatro d'ira*: *Vol. I*, that demonstrate their rapidly evolving artistic growth in the studio. Complementing Raggi's fiery array of crunching riffs, velvety rhythms and slippery solos (he namechecks Jimmy Page, Slash, John Frusciante and Jimi Hendrix as major influences) is the powerhouse rhythm section of De Angelis and drummer Ethan Torchio (she brings the punk spirit, while Torchio, who joined

ITALY'S MÅNESKIN
ARE AN UNLIKELY
WORLDWIDE
SENSATION.
IN THIS EXCLUSIVE
INTERVIEW,
GW TRACKS DOWN
GUITARIST THOMAS
RAGGI AND
BASSIST VICTORIA
DE ANGELIS TO
FIND OUT EXACTLY
WHAT MAKES THIS
STEAMROLLER ROCK
(AND ROLL)

BY JOE BOSSO PHOTO BY FABIO GERMINARIO



MAGIC IN THE MOON-LIGHT

MÅNESKIN is the Danish word for moonlight (bassist Victoria is half Danish, if that helps). Even though the English-speaking universe tends to say MAIN-skin or MAN-eh-skin, it's actually MOAN-ahskin, thanks to that cool little overring above the A. That said, we get the impression they really don't care what the hell you call them...

shortly after the group formed, is the jazz head). Live, however, the band is already a fully formed behemoth. Showtime for them is a chance to show off, and from the moment they take the stage they explode, generating the kind of raw, visceral excitement few groups can match.

Of course, it helps to have a badass frontman, and David, who grew up studying singers like Steven Tyler and Anthony Keidis, is a naturally flamboyant peacock who has no use for subtlety. At the recent MTV Video Awards (during which the band won a Best Alternative Video Award for "I Wanna Be Your Slave"), he strutted the stage in backless chaps that left nothing to the imagination. De Angelis, too, grabbed attention for a wardrobe malfunction that saw the top of her outfit hanging down. (MTV cameras quickly pulled away, but the moment made headlines the next day.)

One could make a case that the band is cynically exploiting its sex appeal, but De Angelis pushes back on the notion. "We don't feel like we should restrict ourselves in any way," she says firmly. "There are underground bands that are like, 'I'm not dressing up' and all of that thing, and that's cool. But we don't care about that. We love to dress up and have fun. We know we can deliver the music, so we're not all about image. But for us to look the way we do, it's just who we are. It's rock 'n' roll."

There is perhaps no greater seal of approval in rock circles than an invitation to open for the Rolling Stones, and late last year Måneskin crossed that one off their bucket list. Recalling the band's performance in front of Stones fans in Las Vegas, De Angelis says, "That's crazy, right? We grew up playing Rolling Stones covers. They're one of the reasons we started doing this in the first place. To be recognized by legends, it was so fulfilling." She laughs. "I guess it means maybe we don't suck so much."

Raggi adds thoughtfully, "Playing for the Rolling Stones' audience was a big challenge for us. The crowd came for the Stones, obviously, so we had to go out there and convince them. It was an important moment, and I guess it was a conquest for us to win over those fans. It was very, very cool."

No other Italian rock band has had your kind of success in the States. Do you guys feel like pioneers?

VICTORIA DE ANGELIS: [Laughs] We're very proud of it because it's really the first time an Italian act makes it so big outside of Italy. But you know, we're not really doing typical Italian music, so we feel like we can add a new shade to how Italy is perceived.

THOMAS RAGGI: What I think is cool is how we might be showing Italian people that they have a chance to do this. Young people, especially, might pick up an instrument and be like, "OK, Måneskin have reached the States in a big way. Maybe I can make it."

Musically, your band has a pretty powerful and crushing sound. How much thought and discussion went into that sound?

RAGGI: A bit of that, sure. We like to have that big, crushing sound. Of course, seeing as we're three players — the drums and two melodic instruments — it makes things easier for each one of us to really stand out. Whatever you play, people are going to hear it quite clearly.

DE ANGELIS: Some of it's talked about, but a lot isn't. But then if one person changes something, it can influence the whole band. If you buy a new pedal or something, it can change the way you write. I think that's really cool, though, how one person can have so much impact. If we had, I don't know, six or seven players, could you really do that? We influence each other and we experiment. Our sound is the result of a long process of experimentation.

RAGGI: Each of us has a different musical background, but together we're a good match. Like Ethan, he's into jazz and classic soul and experimental stuff, and that's really cool when he plays a song that's more rock. Then you throw in a little rap and whatever else we want to do, and suddenly there's a crossover sound.

Thomas, who really sparked your interest in the guitar?

RAGGI: It was a lot of hard rock music — Guns N' Roses, Led Zeppelin. I got into Slash and Jimmy Page, but I also really loved Jimi Hendrix. The way he composed songs was utterly amazing. One of my biggest influences is John Frusciante from the Chili Peppers. I paid a lot of attention to the way he could play rhythm and lead with such feel and creativity. He's just sick. I also really like Joe Bonamassa, but his style is very different from anything I do.

You mention Frusciante. I hear that in how you play arpeggios, but also, like you said, the way you switch between rhythm and lead.

RAGGI: Exactly, yeah. When you're the only guitarist, you have a lot of responsibility because you're the most harmonic instrument in the band. You have to build songs and keep the music together, but you're also supposed to throw in fills and licks and solos. It's a big role. Somebody like Frusciante gave me a lot of ideas in [terms of] how I would handle my own job as the sole guitarist in a band. As a soloist, like I mentioned, there's Slash and Hendrix and Jimmy Page. I listened to them all quite a bit.

Victoria, how about you? Did you start out on bass?

DE ANGELIS: I started playing guitar when I was eight, but I switched to the bass a few years later. I bought my first bass because I wanted to play "Come As You Are." I liked playing guitar, but the process of switching to bass felt very natural to me. I played bass in a lot of bands, and that's where I found a lot of my passion for writing. I didn't like playing alone in my room and stuff. Everything came to life for me when I was in a rehearsal studio with the whole band.

I loved a lot of punk. When I was younger, I was into Public Image, the Clash, the Stooges — bands like that. Sonic Youth I loved. That music formed a lot of my ideas for how to play the bass. I like to be very driving and get a groove, but I do like to play parts that are almost like guitar riffs.

You guys are saying something interesting, and I don't know if you realize it. All of your influences are either American or British.

DE ANGELIS: Absolutely.

RAGGI That's true. Oh, and the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion.

Is there any Italian rock music that speaks to you?

DE ANGELIS: I mean, there are some good bands in Italy, but they always stayed in the underground scene.

RAGGI: That's right.

DE ANGELIS: It's something I discovered later on, but when I was younger I wasn't really exposed to them. They weren't really introduced to us in any way. There's a band called Afterhours who are very good, but I found out about them later. I wasn't influenced by them as a kid. I think we really just listened to the music our parents listened to.

You were both pretty young when you formed Måneskin. Victoria, you mentioned you played in earlier bands. Did you feel as though any of them had a chance of making it?

DE ANGELIS: No. We were in many bad bands before this one. Very bad bands. [Laughs]

Let's talk about your instruments. Victoria, I see you're into the Danelectro Longhorn bass. Why did you gravitate toward



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Victoria De Angelis

Victoria De Angelis with her Danelectro Longhorn bass

that model?

DE ANGELIS: Well, at first I played a Fender P-Bass, which was a lot of fun, but it was pretty heavy on me. I wanted a short-scale bass, so I bought a Fender Mustang. It was good, but it didn't have the low end I was looking for. Then I happened to see the Danelectro Longhorn in a used-instrument page. It was pretty cheap, so I thought, "OK, fine, I'll try that." At first, I didn't think it was good and I was like, "Whatever. I'll just bring it to rehearsals." Then I started to play it with the band, and I was like, "Fuck, this is actually really good!" That's how it all started. I really liked its tone and how it felt. There's not many bass players who use it, so I like how it's a bit unique.

Now, Thomas, you play a few different guitars, but it looks like your main one is the '63 Fender Relic Strat.

RAGGI: I use that, but to be honest, my main guitar is a Squier, not a Strat. It's

one of the older ones from Japan. I used to play only Fender Strats. To me, a Stratocaster is like a complete instrument. I love how you can play funk and rock and metal with a Strat. It's a very comfortable instrument, too, so that's pretty great. I've experimented with other types of guitars. Actually, I want to play a Danelectro because I've never used one before. That would be great.

Let's touch on a few of your songs. "Zitti e buoni" has a knockout riff. I hear some Jimmy Page there, but to me it all comes from Hendrix and "Purple Haze."

RAGGI: Yeah, that's true. Like I mentioned, I take a lot of inspiration from Jimi Hendrix. "Purple Haze," "Foxey Lady" — I wasn't thinking specifically about things like that, but Hendrix comes very naturally to me. I'm really into his music.

Victoria, on a lot of songs, particularly on "Supermodel," the sound of the bass really dominates the verses.

pe angelis: It does. Thomas and I really like to mix it up. Sometimes he'll be more out in front with the guitar, and other times the bass will be more dominant. It just depends on the writing process and who comes up with a riff. You don't always want to hear one sound throughout. That's something we find challenging — finding the right moments for the guitar to stand out, and other times when Thomas' sound sits back a bit. We don't want it to sound boring.

You have a song called "Make You Feel" in which you two lock in for a really tight, pummeling sound. It's a little reminiscent of the White Stripes.

the White Stripes, of course. Jack
White is so fucking good. He's one of
the best guitarists ever, the way he
experiments with sounds and effects.
Actually, I would say Royal Blood —
they have that big, thick sound. We
like to try to have one melodic instrument carrying the whole thing, sometimes the guitar, and then it's the bass.
It gives more energy to the sound.

RAGGI: That's what I find very inspiring, how we can sustain the sound of
the band with these very simple but
creative parts. We're both very flexible

in that way.

Thomas, there's a song called "Time Zone" in which you play very beautiful, clean arpeggios, but at the end you go for it with a whacked-out solo.

RAGGI: [Laughs] Oh, thank you, bro. Thank you so much. Yeah, when I do a solo, I like to go for it.

OK, so we have to talk about "Beggin'." You guys are so young; how the hell did you latch onto a Four Seasons song from 1967?

random, actually. It was a song we just started playing when we first got together. We didn't have any originals yet, so we started playing covers at shows and parties. We thought it was interesting to take something that is far, far from you and then make it your own, which I think we did. It's way more fun and more challenging than just playing it the way people know.

Your albums have done well, but the band really broke through with singles. Does that create pressure for you to really make sure that your next album is as solid as your singles?

RAGGI: In a way, because I think people really need to listen to the full story about us, basically.

DE ANGELIS: We're trying not to feel too much pressure, but of course, we want to do something good. The industry works the way it works, and that's fine. We're happy to do singles, but for our next album, it's like a big photograph of what we are. We want to give you different tastes and not just do the more mainstream stuff. We'd like to experiment more.

You've toured the States quite a bit in the past year. What are your impressions?

RAGGI: Oh, my, well, it's nice! [Laughs] It's great to see how people have accepted us. It's really hard for a band like ours to reach so many people in America. There's so many incredible artists in the States — in New York and L.A. and all over. If you're from America and you come to Italy, that's one thing, but to have it the other way around, that's something else. It's crazy. Overall, we're very happy about what's been happening.



PETRUCCI MAKES no bones about it:

He loves to tour. If he's not in the studio, he's always hot to hit the road, be it with Dream Theater or as a long-running guest on one of Joe Satriani's G3 excursions. "Live performance is something I can't get enough of," he says. "Making a record is one kind of thrill, and it's something I take very seriously and find a lot of joy in. But for me, nothing replaces the magic of bringing my music to audiences. There's just no substitute for it."

Shortly after completing the first leg of Dream Theater's Top of the World tour this past spring (dates that had to be rescheduled twice due to the Covid pandemic), Petrucci got the road itch again. But the tour he's embarking on this fall differs from anything he's ever done before. This time he's taking the stage as a solo artist.

"It's something I've thought about for a long time," he says, "but there was never room in the schedule because Dream Theater is always so busy." He also admits it wasn't until recently that he felt as if he had enough of his own material to fill a solo set. "There was a 15-year gap between my first album [2005's Suspended Animation] and my second one, *Terminal Velocity*, so it took a while for me to feel like I had enough of my own music to do a whole show," he says. "With Dream Theater not doing anything in the fall, I looked at the break and said, 'OK, if there was ever a time to do this, it's now."

Petrucci chose bassist Dave LaRue for his live lineup — the two have enjoyed a long and creative history over the years, playing together on G3 tours and collaborating on both of the guitarist's solo albums. But it's the drummer who rounds out the rhythm section that's causing the stir among Dream Theater fans: It's none other than Mike Portnoy. The upcoming tour will mark the first time

PHOTO BY RAYON RICHARDS

FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, JOHN PETRUCCI HITS THE ROAD — SOLO

BY JOE BOSSO



THE ANSWER WITHIN

JOHN PETRUCCI'S TOP THREE **TONE TIPS**

1. KEEP YOUR SIGNAL **CHAIN SIMPLE**

When I'm recording in the studio, I try to keep my signal chain simple. For me, it's all about a guitar plugged into the amp that's plugged into a cabinet. That's it. If you're playing with the right gear, what's coming out of the speaker should be what you're able to capture on your recording. A lot of guitarists try too hard; they clutter their signal chain with different pedals and things, and they wind up unhappy with the results. If you just get a good sound with your guitar, your amp and your speaker, you'll be off to a good start. Then you can work on all the other sound variables if you like.

2. FIND YOUR OWN **VOICE WITH** THE RIGHT GEAR

I've been very fortunate in that I've been able to develop gear to my taste. Working with companies whose gear I played and loved for years — Ernie Ball Music Man, DiMarzio, Mesa/Boogie, Dunlop and TC Electronic, and of late there's been Neural I've been able to find my own voice. It's a real honor to develop musical instruments and equipment with those companies.

I realize, however, that not everybody is in my position, but that doesn't mean players can't try to find the gear that speaks to them. Search

Petrucci and Portnoy will share a stage since the drummer's high-profile exit from Dream Theater back in 2010.

"I can't believe it's been 12 years already," Petrucci says. "Time sure flies. But we have been doing some things together. Mike also played on Terminal Velocity, and last year we worked with each other on Liquid Tension Experiment 3, so we've been busy in the studio. The two of us haven't done anything live since he left Dream Theater, which kind of blows my mind." He laughs. "The first show we do is going to be a trip!"

Making Petrucci's solo tour more interesting is his opening act — Meanstreak, the first all-female thrash metal band in history, which also features three wives of past and present Dream Theater members. Among its lineup is Petrucci's guitarist wife, Rena Sands; bassist Lisa Martens Myung, who is married to John Myung; and Marlene Portnoy on guitar. The band formed in 1985 and released one album, 1988's Roadkill, before disbanding in 1994. Now reunited, the band will play a warm-up show before taking off on Petrucci's solo dates.

"I'm almost more excited about Meanstreak coming on this tour than I am for myself," Petrucci says with a laugh. "They've gotten back together, and it's going to be really cool. They have fans from back in the day, but for a lot of people, this will be their first time seeing them. I think we're going to have a blast."

The Dream Theater tour that you recently finished was pretty extensive. Unlike some other bands, you guys didn't have any Covid mishaps.

Thankfully, no. That was the worry. It's been a nightmare for a lot of bands that have had to stop their tours or cancel them altogether. We followed all the rules and precautions. And we saw no one – no VIPs, no after-shows, nobody backstage, no nothing. It was difficult – you're traveling throughout Europe, so it's not like you're completely in a bubble. You're going to hotels and everything else. But we were as careful as possible, and there were no issues. I think we're planning to continue the Top of the World tour in 2023.

As you've said, your solo tour setlist will be made up of songs from your own albums. Do you think there's a possibility you'll play anything else?

I don't know. I haven't put the setlist together yet, but I'm thinking about it. The only times I played any songs from Terminal Velocity live were at my boot camp last year, although I did preview a few of those songs on a G3 tour before I recorded them. But really, there's a lot of material nobody has ever seen me play live. Whether or not I throw anything else in, we'll see. I guess we can have fun doing a cover tune or something. But I've never done a solo tour, so I want to play my own music.

Mike Portnoy. Think he knows any cover tunes?

[Laughs] Yeah, right? I could probably call out anything and he would know it.

Between working with you, Dave LaRue and Mike Portnoy are also members of Flying Colors. I guess you won't have to worry about your bassist and drummer meshing.

Exactly. They already mesh! And it should be said, we've done this combination before on G3, so they're locked in. I love working with Dave. He's done both of my solo albums and every G3 that I've done. We have a great musical connection. And, of course, Mike and I have a long history of being creative together. There's a full trio chemistry. I have no doubt it's going to be great.

Is there a difference in how you work with Dave LaRue than, say, with Dream Theater's bassist, John Myung?

Oh, yeah. First of all, John Myung and I grew up together, so we've known each other since we were 12. We started writing music together in middle school and throughout high school. We have the same influences — Rush, Iron Maiden, all that stuff. We started Dream Theater when we went to Berklee. We have a chemistry and a relationship that you can't even describe. It's obviously very intuitive. He's been in Dream Theater all this time, just like me, and maybe he's done one side project.

In the case of Dave, despite all the recording we've done and all the improvisational things we've done live, I've never written with him. So I don't have the same experience of being creative with him in the same way I have with John. They're both unique bass players and come from different schools of playing, stylistically. Dave has more experience of playing with other people there's Flying Colors, the Dregs and some others. He's maybe more of a chameleon in that way. But they're both technically incredible and just phenomenal.

And how about working with Mike Portnoy? How is that different from how you play with Mike Mangini?

Well, they're both incredible — that goes without saving. My relationship with Mike Portnoy is similar to my thing with John Myung. We were at Berklee together, so we were 17, 18. We played in a band together for 25 years and did everything together. We have an ingrained chemistry. When Mike came down to record on Terminal Velocity, there was an unspoken natural connection between us. It just came right back. It's like riding a bike.

With Mike Mangini, we were able to



form a bond very quickly. He came into Dream Theater with this big talent and big personality — he was everything we were looking for. It was like we knew each other already. He's from Boston, but if he grew up in New York, we would have been friends and would've played together. Over the past 12 years, we've established a musical bond that's similar to what I have with other players. I'm really proud of all we've accomplished.

I feel really fortunate to have connections to two drummers named Mike. What a great position I'm in: I get to be in Dream Theater with Mike Mangini; I can step on stage and in the studio with him and have these incredible experiences. At the same time, I can reconnect with Mike Portnoy and do these projects with him — and now tour with him. As a guitar player, I'm pretty spoiled. [Laughs]

In terms of reconnecting with Mike Portnoy, there were so many years in which you didn't play together. Did you two have any stuff to iron out?

No, because the side that people don't see is, we've always been friends and were always connected. Along with Dream Theater, there's Meanstreak — I'm married to Rena, John's married to Lisa, and Mike is married to Marlene. We were all in each other's weddings. We all had kids around the same time. Even during the period when Mike left the band up to when he played with me on Terminal Velocity, we had already reconnected and hung out together. All of our kids are friends. There's a private side to all of this that people don't know about.

It's different when you're in a band with somebody for 25 years; you're with them every day and you do everything together, and then suddenly, you're not. There was a period in the beginning when we just didn't see each other so much. But like I said, the thing with our families never went away

— we got together on holidays and things like that. When he came into the studio to play, there were no personal things to iron out, because they weren't there.

You mentioned Meanstreak and how excited you are about them coming out with you.

I am! It's going to be great. I've done some things with Rena. She did my guitar camp last year, and we played together in Holland at the Sena Awards. But I've never toured with her. This will be the first time we've ever done such a thing as husband and wife. It'll be great. I'm really looking forward to it.

Lastly, do you have any thoughts about the next Dream Theater album? Is it too early for that?

It's a little early. We'll be back on the road next year, and at that point my mind will start to drift toward the studio, as it usually does. The creative ideas start to seep in all on their own. It's a funny process: You get so immersed in the album vou're doing. It's vour whole life and you're just consumed by it. You go to bed thinking of the music you're making. You can't shut it off. Then you finish it, and you're like, "OK, it's done." But that only lasts for so long. You go on tour, and suddenly you're like, "You know what? I'm getting these new creative ideas." Then you start to really think about the next record. I'm not quite in that phase yet. I've thought about it a little, but I know it's a ways off. @

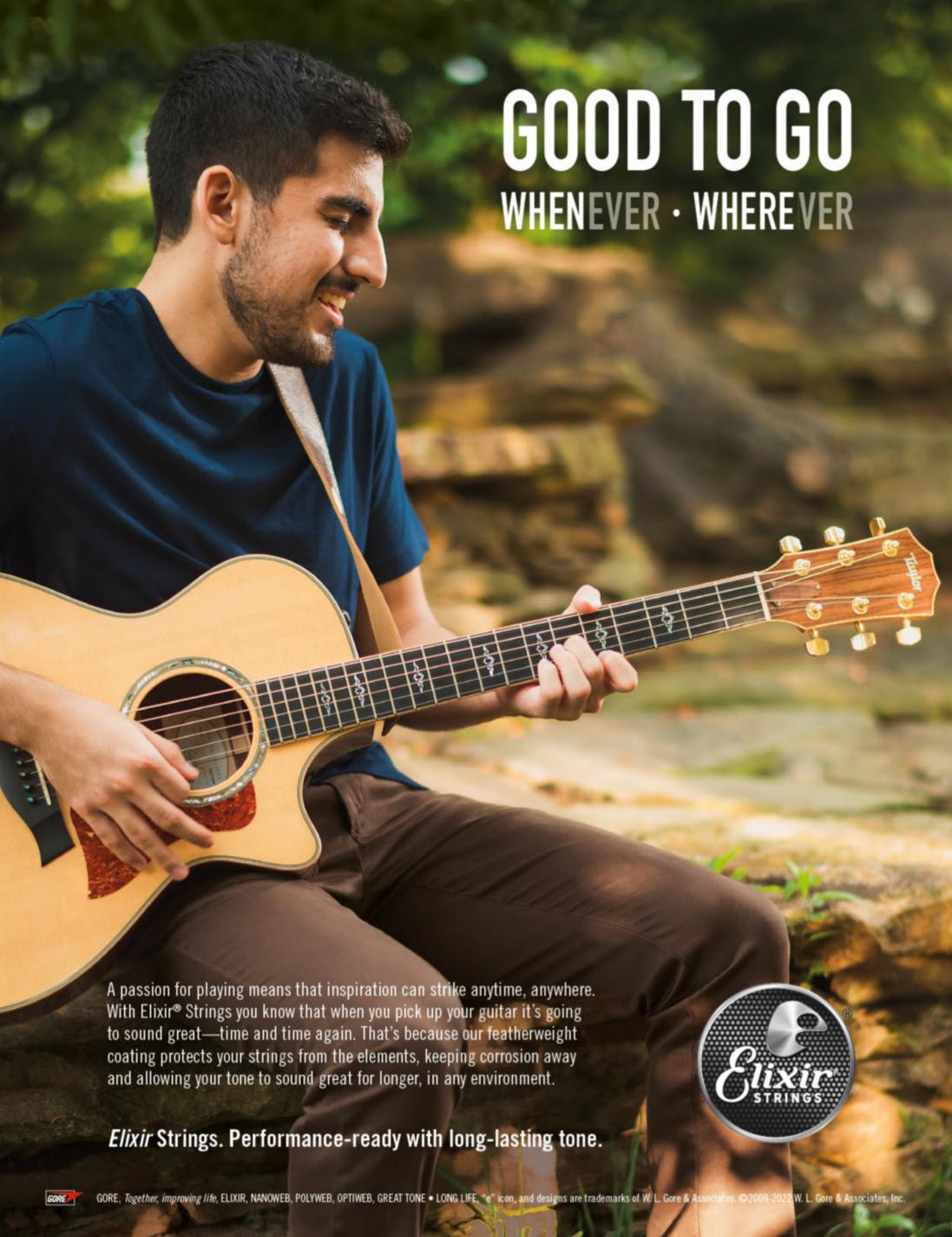
out guitars and equipment that you connect with and can deliver the sounds you hear in your head. Listen to your favorite players, and ask yourself, "What are they using? How do they get those sounds?" A lot of players have sounds in their heads, but they don't know how to achieve them. They might be using the wrong pickups, or they're playing through the wrong amps. Look around, play around with things. Eventually, you'll find the right guitar and gear combination you need. But don't settle for stuff that doesn't work for you. You'll only set yourself up for frustration.

3. REALIZE THAT **TONE COMES** FROM YOU

This is a little existential, but I swear by it. The guitar is a tactile instrument. You're using the flesh of your hands to interact with it, and regardless of everything else you use, the sound you make comes from you. Every guitarist sounds different, and that's because every guitarist is different. That's the beautiful thing about playing the instrument.

I remember being on a G3 tour with Joe Satriani. I've always been so enamored of him — his skill and his tone. One day I asked him, "Can I play through your rig?" And the funny thing was, once I played through his rig, I didn't sound like Joe at all - I sounded like me. And I was hit with the realization that, because the guitar is a tactile instrument, so much of the tone came from my touch. That's something very important to keep in mind. Try to understand how you affect the tone of your guitar. It's your gift. Embrace it and use it. No matter what else goes into guitar playing, you are the most important thing that you bring to the table.

-Joe Bosso



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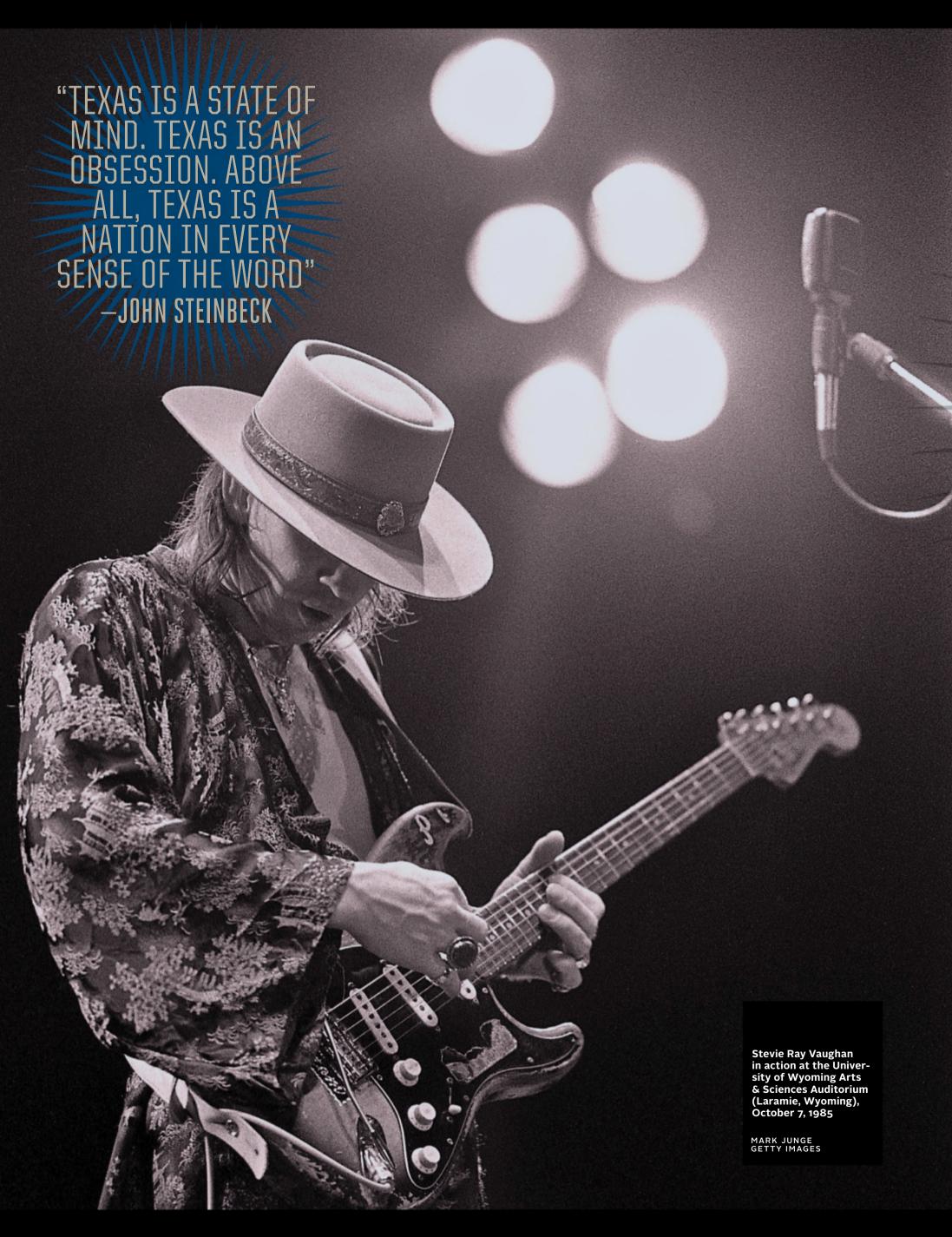




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OR NOT TO DA







IN TERMS OF actual geographical size, Texas is pretty much a pipsqueak compared to, say, Alaska. (For those keeping score, Alaska accounts for 665,384 square miles versus Texas' total area of 268,596 square miles.) But if we're measuring Texas' mark on American culture, specifically through music, it's hard to make an argument that any other territory comes close to the Lone Star State's impact. From cowboy prairie songs to Tejano and conjunto mu-

sic, from Western swing to the blues, from early rock 'n' roll to hip-hop, and dozens of genres and sub-genres along the way, the sounds of Texas have enthralled and inspired listeners in ways that are almost incalculable.

The state also boasts bragging rights when it comes to the number of influential guitarists who have called it their home. Which begs the question: Just what is it about Texas, and why has it been such a fertile breeding ground for guitarists?





DEEP IN THE HEART OF OUR TEXAS ISSUE...

FACING PAGE: MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES

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ABOVE: MARTYN GO

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JIMMIE VAUGHAN NAMES HIS TOP 12 TEXAS BLUES GUITARISTS>>> 68

The oft-used phrase "There must be something in the water," comes to mind, though no doubt Billy Gibbons would make a strong case for tequila. But perhaps there's something about the state's sheer magnitude, its rich history and renegade spirit that inspires guitarists to dream big and channel those ideas into their music unbound by restrictions. Or maybe it's simply what choreographer (and Texas native) Tommy Tune once said: "I think Texans have more fun than the rest of the world."

When we crafted the following list of Texas guitarists, we had to consider what actually constituted a "Texas guitarist," and our criteria was based on anyone born there, raised there or who made their greatest impact there. There were, however, certain qualifiers that could be seen as subjective. For example, Phish guitarist Trey Anastasio was born in Fort Worth, but since he moved to New Jersey when he was three and then relocated to Vermont - where he's famously lived ever since — it would be a gigantic stretch of the imagination to call him a "Texas guitarist." (Should we ever publish an issue celebrating guitarists from the Northeast, Anastasio will be there.)

Be advised: After reading about the 30 guitarists we've highlighted here (which are *not* presented in any sort of numerical "order"), you might find yourself playing guitar with a new sense of swagger. In which case, don't thank us — thank them.

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN

"I'm really just another Texas blues guitarist, but I think I've got something special to say with my music," Stevie Ray Vaughan told us back in 1988. Then, prophetically, he added, "But I have to keep these things in perspective, because they're gifts. It's all a gift, and I have to give it back all the time or it goes away."

More than any other guitarist, Vaughan embodied and celebrated Texas. Its grandeur ran through his spectacularly untamed sound that erupted with the force of an oil gusher. Its sense of danger inhabited a vibrato that could hiss like a rattlesnake. With his colorful scarves, silver rings and his trademark Plateau hat, he looked like a badass outlaw. And yet, he comported himself like a modest country gentleman. Referring to the bluesmen he studied — people like Albert Collins, Otis Rush, Buddy Guy, Hubert Sumlin, along with B.B., Albert and Earl King — he said, "Those guys are the ones who really ought to have the recognition. They're the pioneers and the innova-

So much of Vaughan's tale now reads like legend: how he came up following - and eventually equaling - his older guitar-playing brother, Jimmie; his rise through the

Austin club scene and his smash appearance at the Montreux Jazz Festival, where he was tapped by David Bowie for Let's Dance; his signing to Epic by John Hammond (who also snagged Dylan and Springsteen). When he released his major-label debut, Texas Flood (boasting treasures like "Love Struck Baby," "Pride and Joy" and the righteous title cut, a masterpiece of hellacious, over-the-top bends), it hit like a hurricane.

Others had been called the heir apparent to Hendrix, but Vaughan's virtuosity and the fullness of feeling he brought to his playing made the claim manifest. His studio cover of "Voodoo Child (Slight Return)" refined some of Hendrix's caterwauling madness, but with his supreme musicality those artfully applied wah squawks and slinky turnarounds — he made it his own.

Backed by his ace rhythm section Double Trouble (drummer Chris Layton, bassist Tommy Shannon and — a bit later on – keyboardist Reese Wynans) and invariably armed with his Number One Strat, Vaughan recorded an encyclopedia of guitar gems like "Couldn't Stand the Weather," "Scuttle Buttin" and "Cold Shot," and after beating alcohol and drugs, he released *In Step*, which featured "Crossfire" and "Tightrope." His death in a helicopter crash, in August 1990 at age 35, was mourned by music fans across the globe. Posthumously, his album with brother Jimmie, Family Style, was issued a month later.

DIMEBAG DARRELL

"I grew up a heavy metal kid and we are a heavy metal band," Dimebag Darrell told us in 1994. "I know it's not fashionable, but I'm proud to say that's what we are and that's what we do."

Dimebag Darrell Abbott loved heavy metal so much that he helped reshape and reinvent it. With his band Pantera (which included his drummer brother, Vinnie Paul Abbott), he took what had become toothless and predictable and made it raw and ferocious again - and suddenly it all sounded disarmingly new. Darrell called the band's relentless attack a "power groove," and countless groups tried to emulate its blunt force, but as is often the case, you just can't improve on an original.

It was obvious from the start that Darrell (born Darrell Lance Abbott in Ennis, Texas, in 1966) had it in him. The son of a musician and recording studio owner, he took to the guitar as a kid and jammed religiously to his favorites (Kiss, Van Halen and Black Sabbath were the biggies). At age 14, he dusted all comers at a local guitar contest (the



prize was a Dean guitar), and within a couple of years he was banned from such competitions — he was that good.

Pantera — and Darrell, who for a time went by "Diamond Darrell" - took a few beats to find their footing. Dispensing with a brief glam metal period, they arrived in full with 1990's Cowboys from Hell, which set the blueprint for the band — there were elements of thrash and traces of the emerging hardcore aesthetic. As "Dimebag Darrell," the guitarist cranked the mosh-pit heat to extreme levels on Vulgar Display of Power and Far Beyond Driven, perfecting his deployment of face-frying solos, drop tunings, unorthodox modes and what he called "harmonic screams" (check out the end of "This Love" for a stunning example). In his Guitar World column, he wrote, "Harmonic screams are my way of 'singing out,' using my guitar instead of my throat."

Following 2000's Reinventing the Steel, tensions mounted in Pantera, and in 2003 the Abbott brothers ended the group and formed a new outfit, Damageplan. Supporting their debut album, New Found Power. the band toured throughout 2004, and on the night of December 8 of that year, in Columbus, Ohio, Darrell was shot to death on stage in an attack that left three others dead. At Darrell's funeral, Eddie Van Halen placed his famous Charvel "bumblebee"

guitar inside the casket.

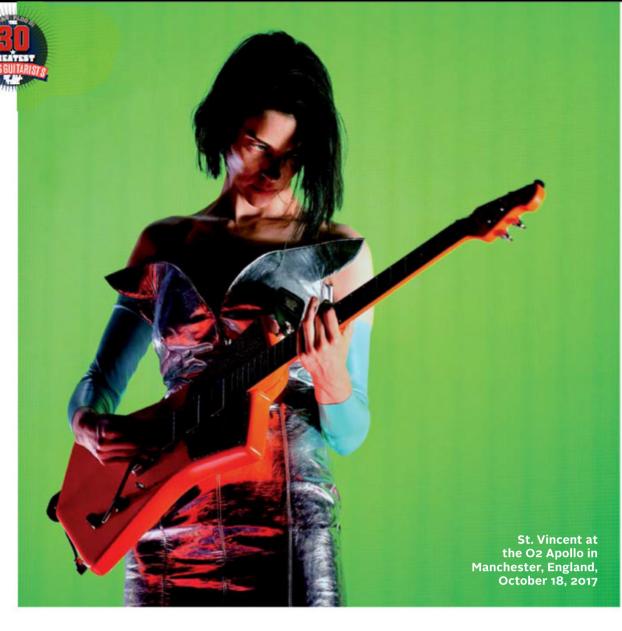
ERIC JOHNSON

There are guitarists with an identifiable sound — and then there's Eric Johnson. With his exquisitely crafted mix of clean and overdriven tones, and his inimitable, sweeping, violin-like solos, his sound is as unique as a fingerprint. As he told us, "It's one thing to become a good player and write songs that people like. But to have a sound where people can pick you out and they know it's you, that's pretty cool."

As it turns out, the Austin native is one hell of a songwriter, too. His 13 solo albums (two this past year) showcase a guitarist steeped in Brill Building songcraft (one of his first gigs was backing up Carole King). For an example of Johnson's compositional genius, there's 1990's "Cliffs of Dover," a remarkable piece of ear candy full of incandescent, almost free-form soloing that, astonishingly, Johnson wrote in all of five minutes. Or as he puts it, "It was like a gift from the universe."

FREDDIE KING

Freddie King is the third of "Three Kings of Blues Guitar" (the other two being Albert and B.B.), and his influence on guitarists across the globe can't be overstated. Brit-



ish players such as Eric Clapton, Mick Taylor, Peter Green and Jeff Beck count him as a major inspiration, and in his homeland he's been heralded by the likes of Stevie Ray Vaughan, Lonnie Mack and Joe Bonamassa, among others.

Born in Gilmer, Texas, King started playing guitar at age six, but after moving with his family to Chicago when he was 15, he came under the spell of Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, T-Bone Walker and Elmore James, all of whom he sat in with when sneaking into the city's nightclubs.

Rejected by Chess Records (the label thought he sounded too much like B.B. King), he signed with Chicago's Federal Records in 1960 and released "Have You Ever Loved a Woman," which brilliantly showcased his spitfire single-note phrasing and piercing sound (he used both a plastic thumb pick and a metal index finger pick). His 1961 hit "Hide Away" is considered the gold standard in blues. An irresistible goodtime shuffle, full of spikey and spunky turnaround licks, its famous mash-up of Jimmy McCracklin "The Walk" and "The Peter Gunn Theme" made it all the more memorable. King died of pancreatitis in 1976 at age 42.

ALBERT COLLINS

He was crowned "The Master of the Telecaster" for the guitar that never left his

hands, but he was also nicknamed "The Ice Man" and "The Razor Blade," references to his stinging yet piquant phrasing and tone. Whatever you called him, one thing was clear: Albert Collins was a true original and a giant among Texas guitarists.

Hailing from Leona, Texas, Collins (born Albert Gene Drewery) was taught guitar by his cousin, Lightnin' Hopkins. From another cousin, Willow Young, he was introduced to the open F minor tuning (F C F A C F) that he would employ throughout his career. After moving to Houston, Collins began performing in clubs alongside the likes of John Lee Hooker and Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown. To complement his unorthodox tuning, Collins incorporated a capo and dispensed with a pick — and his sound was complete. A natural showman, he also favored a 100-foot guitar cord that allowed him to stroll around venues and get close to his fans.

With his shivers-inducing tone (he dialed back the bass on his cranked-tothe-max amp), Collins made his mark on aptly titled cuts such as "Frosty," "Cold, Cold Feeling," "The Freeze" and "Thaw Out" (later adapted by Jimi Hendrix on "Drivin' South"). Among his standout albums is one of his personal favorites, 1986's Cold Snap, which earned him a Grammy nomination. Collins passed away in 1993 at age 61.

LIGHTNIN' HOPKINS

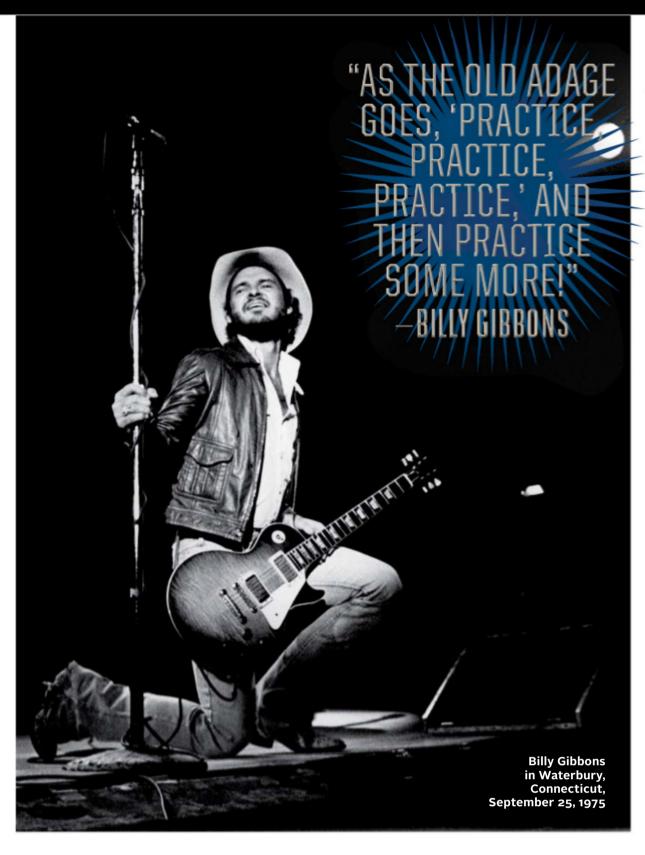
He's one of the most prolific blues guitarists in history (some 85 albums and 200 singles), and he's certainly one of the most influential. Recognized for bringing the blues from the back porches of the country to rural and city stages, Sam "Lightnin" Hopkins did more than simply play music; he let you in on a feeling — pain tempered with joy.

Born in Centerville, Texas, in 1912, Hopkins made his first guitar out of a cigar box after watching Blind Lemon Jefferson play. In time, Jefferson befriended Hopkins and allowed him to accompany him during church gathering performances — a rare distinction, as Jefferson never let anybody play alongside him. Already, Hopkins had developed his distinctive style of acoustic playing, a deceptively simple approach involving plucking bass-note rhythms and melodies (with a thumb pick) while fingerpicking two- and three-note chords on higher strings.

At first, Hopkins was paired with singer and pianist Wilson Smith (the pair were dubbed "Thunder and Lightnin"), but with "Katie Mae Blues" in 1946, Hopkins began his own recording career as a guitarist and singer, and in a short period he churned out a treasure trove of material, including "T-Model Blues," "Coffee Blues" and "Baby Please Don't Go." After falling out of favor in the Fifties, Hopkins was rediscovered by blues fans, folkies and rockers in the Sixties. He continued to record and tour until his death in 1982 at age 69.

WILLIE NELSON

By the end of the Sixties, Willie Nelson (born in Abbott, Texas, in 1933), had already written a slew of standards, most significantly Patsy Cline's jukebox smash "Crazy," and had established himself as a Grand Ole Opry staple. Still, true stardom eluded him. Then, in 1969, he bought a Martin N-20 classical guitar that he outfitted with a Baldwin "Prismatone" pickup, and its dulcet tone perfectly complemented his plaintive singing voice. He nicknamed the guitar Trigger, and it became his constant companion on breakthrough albums like Red Headed Stranger and Stardust that brought him international success. A virtuoso player, heavily influenced by gypsy jazz pioneer Django Reinhardt, Nelson is noted for his ferocious strumming style (his flat pick has gouged sizable holes in Trigger) and his syncopated vet melodic soloing - "On the Road Again" is a masterpiece of inventive phrasing. At age 89, he's still



recording and touring.

CHARLIE CHRISTIAN

One of the true pioneers of jazz and swing, and perhaps the leading figure in establishing the electric guitar as a lead instrument in a band, Charlie Christian was born in Bonham, Texas, in 1916. A musician since his childhood, he played guitar in various jazz outfits through the South and Midwest, and in 1937 he purchased his famous Gibson ES-150 electric hollowbody (which sported a bar-style pickup later called the "Charlie Christian pickup"), on which he perfected his unique, horn-like approach to soloing.

Hired by bandleader Benny Goodman, who was intrigued by the sound of the electric guitar, Christian became a star player in the Benny Goodman Orchestra. The guitarist's lively, single-note soloing dominated cuts like "Honevsuckle Rose" and "Solo

Flight," and he would soon join Goodman in a new group, the Benny Goodman Sextet. Sadly, Christian never recorded his own music as a bandleader. He died of tuberculosis in 1942 at age 25.

TRINI LOPEZ

Just as Bob Dylan was bringing folk to the mainstream, Trini Lopez exploded on the scene in 1963 with his exuberant cover of Pete Seeger's "If I Had a Hammer" (played on an electric guitar, no less). The Dallasborn performer became a major star in the Sixties with other briskly strummed hits like "Lemon Tree" and "I'm Comin' Home, Cindy." So huge was his fame that he played a major role in the Steve McQueen blockbuster The Dirty Dozen. Lopez was also asked by Gibson to design a signature guitar, and he came up with two: the Trini Lopez Standard and the Lopez Deluxe. Dave Grohl prizes his 1967 original Trini Lopez Standard, and a reissue of the 1964 model is available now. Lopez died from Covid complications in 2020.

JOHNNY WINTER

For virtuoso guitarist Johnny Winter, spreading the gospel of the blues was his mission in life, and one could make a strong case that the music was always there to save him. Born in Beaumont, Texas, in 1944, he was afflicted with albinism (a condition shared with his younger brother, multi-instrumentalist Edgar) and was legally blind. Taunted by classmates, he sought solace with the records by bluesmen like Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf (he would often joke that they, too, had problems because of skin color).

Winter's guitar skills stood out early (almost from the start he used a thumb pick), and by age 15 he cut a Chuck Berryesque single, "School Day Blues," with his band, Johnny and the Jammers (which included Edgar on saxophone). By the late Sixties, he had developed his high-velocity pinky-finger slide playing to a dangerous degree, and he cut the indie album The Progressive Blues Experiment. After an appearance with Mike Bloomfield and Al Kooper in New York City, Winter signed with Columbia and released his eponymous major-label debut, which signaled to the world that a new voice in blues had arrived.

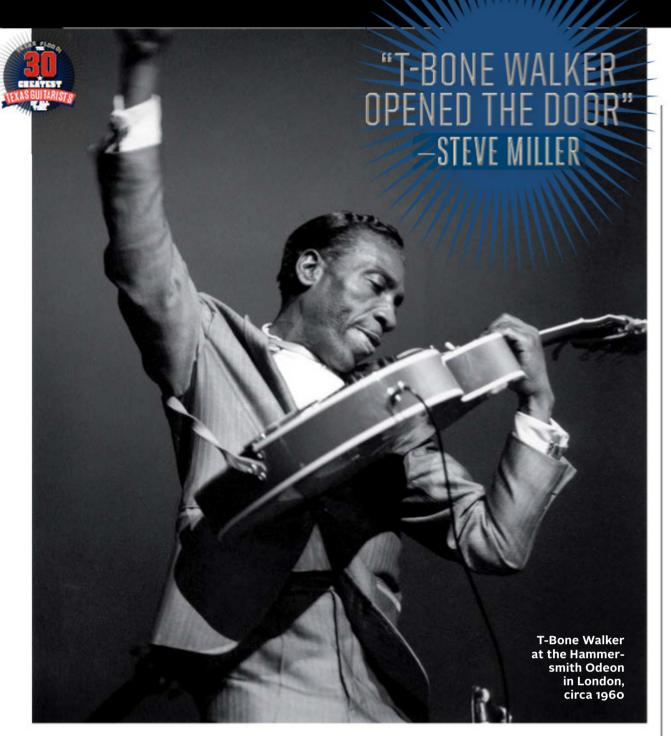
Career highs (producing mid-Seventies albums for Muddy Waters) and lows (heroin addiction, unscrupulous management) followed, and after a brief dalliance with rock, Winter recorded the classic 1977 album Nothin' But the Blues, on which he recommitted himself to his true calling.

Rarely without his 1963 Gibson Firebird V, he recorded and performed until his death in 2014, aged 70.

BILLY GIBBONS

With his carefully cultivated image — shades, hats and an unruly beard that would grow to mid-chest level over the years — Billy Gibbons looks as if he walked off the set of an imaginary Western. But perhaps more iconic than the guitarist's easily recognizable appearance is his distinctive guitar sound – growling, greasy, expressive, outrageous, beautifully expressive and big as the Lone Star State itself. Since 1969, it's been the backbone of ZZ Top's mighty roar — "that little ol' band from Texas" as they modestly called themselves — and it's thrilled and influenced fellow players across the globe.

As a young guitarist, Gibbons was enthralled by blues legends such as Muddy Waters, Jimmy Reed and Lightnin' Hop-



kins. His biggest influence, however, was B.B. King, whom he would meet early on in ZZ Top's career. "I was in the dressing room and B.B. said to me, 'Can I play your guitar?" Gibbons told us. "I said, 'Sure man.' He strummed it a few times and said, 'Why you working so hard?' I said, 'What do you mean?' He said, 'Those strings. You got real heavy, heavy strings.' I said, 'Well, isn't that how to get the heavy, heavy sound?' He said, 'No! Don't be working so hard!"

Ever since then, Gibbons' guitars, particularly his trusty "Pearly Gates" 1959 Gibson Les Paul Standard, have featured superlight strings, which he used to maximum effect on ZZ Top's early hits such as "Tush" and "La Grange" and on through multi-platinum smashes from *Eliminator* ("Gimme All Your Lovin'," "Sharp Dressed Man," "Legs") and beyond.

On boogie-based groovers or modern synth-laden cuts, Gibbons' economic guitar style is a rich *mélange* of his influences. Key to his approach is his crafty application of "squealing" pinch harmonics ("it's meat on metal on wood"), tapped bend licks and hybrid picking, as well as sweet and soulful legato finger slides that he employs in many of his solos.

None of it came easily, however. As he told us, "Learning to play that agonizing F chord was miserable. In fact, I would encourage anybody just starting out to be sure to take time to, as the old adage goes, 'practice, practice, practice,' and then practice some more."

JIMMIE VAUGHAN

Perhaps unfairly, many refer to Jimmie Vaughan as Stevie Ray's big brother, but as Stevie told us back in 1984, "I think he's the better player — so there!" Vaughan grew up playing the music of Magic Sam, Buddy Guy, Lonnie Mack, Jimmy Reed and, of course, the Three Kings. By the early Seventies, when he formed the Fabulous Thunderbirds, he was considered one of Austin's top guitarists — soulful yet refined, his every note impeccably placed but rendered with a cutting tone (treble rolled all the way up, bridge pickup raised) that commanded your attention.

After years of commercial disappointments, the T-Birds crashed the charts in 1986 with the good-time cut "Tuff Enuff." By the start of the new decade, music fans who longed to hear the two Strat giants

together got their wish as Jimmie and Stevie Vaughan finally recorded a duet album, *Family Style*. Tragically, Stevie Ray passed away a month before the record's release. For a time, Vaughan shied away from the spotlight, but gradually he returned to making music. On his most recent album, 2019's *Baby, Please Come Home*, he dusted off rare blues gems.

BRAD DAVIS

If you're going to nickname yourself "The Shredder," you had better possess some mad skills. Brad Davis has crazy-mad skills and then some. With his lightning-fast flatpicking chops, the Commerce, Texas, native proves that country guitarists can blaze just as hard as metalheads. Davis first came to prominence during his nineyear stint in Marty Stuart's band. In addition, he's worked with Warren Zevon, John Jorgenson, Willie Nelson, Dwight Yokum, David Lee Roth and Billy Bob Thornton, among others. Inspired by Eddie Van Halen's two-handed tapping, Davis came up with his own method of playing similar rolling patterns with a flatpick called the "double-down up" technique. Over the years, it's bewitched and bedeviled players worldwide.

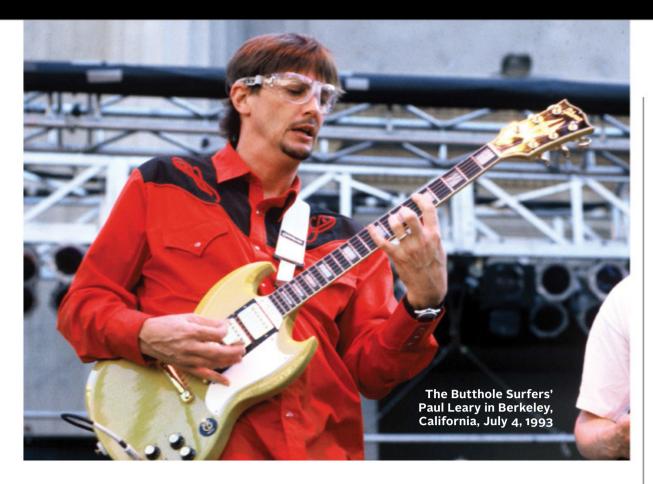
T-BONE WALKER

He's been called the "Father of the Electric Blues Guitar," and when you consider the guitarists T-Bone Walker influenced — Stevie Ray Vaughan, Eric Clapton, Jimi Hendrix, the three Kings (B.B., Freddie and Albert), and many others — the title is deserved.

Born Albert Thibeaux Walker in Linden, Texas, Walker played a variety of instruments, including guitar, and by 15 he was performing professionally under the tutelage of family friend Blind Lemon Jefferson. Billed as "Oak Cliff T-Bone" (the moniker was soon shortened), he made his recording debut with "Wichita Falls Blues" in 1929. Unlike other bluesmen, Walker incorporated swing and jazz elements into his playing — his smooth tone and artful phrasing made 1942's "I Got a Break Baby" one of his first hits. His signature song, 1947's "Call It Stormy Monday" is a masterpiece of chordal composition and innovative double-time soloing. Walker continued recording right until his death in 1974 at age 64.

DOYLE BRAMHALL II

Some guitarists just have it in their DNA.



Such is the case with Dallas' own Doyle Bramhall II, son of Doyle Bramhall Sr., who played drums for Lightnin' Hopkins, Freddie King and the Vaughan brothers. On his own, Bramhall toured with the Fabulous Thunderbirds and formed the Arc Angels with Charlie Sexton. He's cut four solo albums that show off his emotive singing and crisp, piquant blues-rock guitar playing. But as a sideman, collaborator and producer, Bramhall has led what he calls a "charmed life," working with everybody from Sheryl Crow to Elton John.

Among his most high-profile gigs was playing guitar for Roger Waters' In the Flesh tour and his extensive affiliation (as touring guitarist and producer) with Eric Clapton. In 2000, Bramhall played with both Clapton and B.B. King on their album *Riding with the King*.

POLYPHIA: TWO IN ONE!

Polyphia guitar virtuosos Tim Henson and Scott LePage don't sound like they're from Texas, but the truth is, they don't sound like they're from anywhere on this planet. Inspired by players such as Steve Vai, Guthrie Govan, Joe Satriani, Stevie Ray Vaughan and Jimi Hendrix, they're also equally enamored with pop, deathcore, hip-hop and EDM, all of which they pack into their gloriously adventurous brand of progressive music. On releases like Renaissance (2016) and New Levels New Devils, they mixed sophisticated guitar wizardry with funk and electronic grooves, and their newest release, Remember That You Will Die, sees them going even deeper, mixing nylon-string flamenco-flavored cuts into their thrilling yet uncategorizable musical stew. For more about these guys, see last month's GW.

CLARENCE "GATEMOUTH" BROWN

Revered by blues artists, Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown always bristled at being pigeonholed. He called his sound — a potent mix of jazz, country, rock 'n' roll, folk, Cajun music and, yes, blues — "American music/ Texas life." Born in Vinton, Louisiana, and raised in Orange, Texas, Brown, who earned his nickname when someone said he had a "voice like a gate," was a natural multi-instrumentalist, but it was on the guitar where he truly excelled. Inspired by T-Bone Walker, he first came to prominence with the wildcat, swing-inspired track "Boogie Uproar" and the sparky, horn-laden gem "Gatemouth Boogie."

Known for his aggressive, punchy singlenote style of picking (thumb and fingers), he could also lay it down soft and smooth, as he did on his signature cut, 1954's "Okie Dokie Stomp," during which he stops his rhythm section cold for a series of buttery slides and sinuous bends. Brown continued his genrebending ways right up to 2004's *Timeless*, released a year before his death.

GARY CLARK JR.

Being called "the next big thing" can often backfire, but Gary Clark Jr. lived up to the hype and then some. The Austin guitarist got his schooling at Antone's (Jimmie Vaughan was a big booster) before scoring with *The Bright Lights* EP. On subsequent albums like *Blak and Blu* and *This Land*, his hot-blooded mix of blues, rock, pop, soul, hip-hop and funk (with even a splash of stoner rock) established him as the real deal — oh, and we can throw in some Grammys,

too. Although Clark is steeped in tradition (Curtis Mayfield, Elmore James, the Three Kings), he bristles at purists and revels in throwing left curves into his guitar playing, often going outside pentatonic shapes by adding 9ths and ringing open strings in his solos. He's used various guitars on stage and on record, but he's partial to Epiphone Casinos and Gibson SGs — in recent years he's designed signature models of both.

BLIND LEMON JEFFERSON

The Father of Texas Blues, Lemon Henry Jefferson was called Blind Lemon Jefferson as he was born blind — or partially blind – in 1893 (though it could be in 1894) in Coutchman, Texas. Originally a street musician, he was one of the first fingerstyle blues guitarists — he even taught T-Bone Walker blues rudiments. Along with his distinctive playing style that mimicked a ragtime piano and a crying, high-pitched singing voice, he began recording sides for Paramount Records in the early 1920s. Among his most popular recordings for the label were "Long Lonesome Blues" and "Booster Blues." Moving to Okeh Records, he scored hits with "Black Snake Moan" and "See That My Grave Is Kept Clean." Arguably his most famous song is 1927's "Matchbox Blues," which was covered as a rockabilly number by Carl Perkins and later by the Beatles. Jefferson died of a heart attack at age 36 way back in 1929.

STEVE MILLER

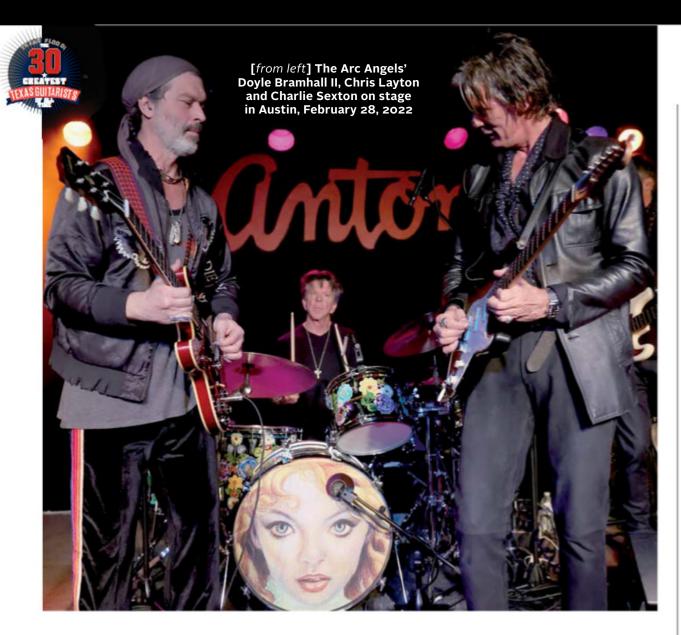
With hits such as "The Joker," "Fly Like an Eagle," "Take the Money and Run," "Swingtown" and "Jungle Love," Steve Miller dominated AM and FM radio during the Seventies. As a child in Wisconsin, he received his first guitar pointers from none other than family friend — and his godfather — Les Paul [See sidebar]. After moving to Dallas, he immersed himself in the blues. One of his first hits, the 1968 car-driving anthem "Living in the U.S.A," is steeped in blues tradition. Soon, his songs took on more of a poprock sensibility, and in each one he wove economical guitar licks that were as crucial as the chorus. "Rock'n Me" features a standout barre chord and hammer-on riff that's pure gold. And "Jet Airliner" takes flight with a turbo-charged, blues-boogie intro that mixes simplicity with rock-star flash.

JOHNNY "GUITAR" WATSON

Houston son John Watson Jr. got his first guitar from his grandfather provided he didn't play "that devil's music," which was

GO AHEAD, PICK ONE UP... NO PERMISSION NECESSARY





precisely what the young Watson went on to play. By his early teens, he was jamming alongside Albert Collins and Johnny Copeland, and after his mother took her with him to Los Angeles, he turned heads in clubs with his flamboyant stage presence and unbridled approach to the guitar.

Billing himself Johnny "Guitar" Watson, in 1954 he released his first single, "Space Guitar," an out-there instrumental that proved revolutionary in terms of reverb. His jarring, scattershot playing on 1956's "Three Hours Past Midnight" inspired Frank Zappa to play the guitar, and through the years he influenced others such as Jimi Hendrix and the Vaughan brothers. He scored hits in the Seventies with "Real Mother for Ya" and "Gangster of Love" (a re-recording of his 1957 song). In 1996, he collapsed and died on stage while performing in Japan.

PAUL LEARY

Thanks to his scorching, throbbing, growling and strangely beautiful guitar tone, Texas native Paul Leary, co-founder of the Butthole Surfers, has become one of the most distinctive and emulated guitarists in punk and alternative rock history. With singer Gibby Hayes, he formed the band in 1981, and on albums like *Hairway to Steven* (1988) and 1996's Electriclarryland (which included the hit single "Pepper"), Leary mixed the energy of garage rock with the smarts of art rock while spinning lines of

psychedelic madness into his solos. Over the years, Leary has produced records for Sublime and the Meat Puppets, among others, and with the Buttholes on hiatus, he released his second solo album, Born Stu*pid*, in 2021.

OMAR RODRÍGUEZ-LÓPEZ

"I've never considered myself a guitarist, and I've never liked the guitar," Omar Rodríguez-López once told us. Nonetheless, the Puerto Rican-born musician (who grew up in El Paso, Texas) made peace with the instrument by abusing its sound with effects, first in the critically acclaimed posthardcore act At the Drive-In and then with the commercial successful experimental band the Mars Volta. On the latter band's gonzo cut "Cicatriz ESP" (from the album Deloused in the Comatorium) he and guest John Frusciante go bonkers on a hallucinogenic guitar jam. Over the years, the avantgarde axeman has released over 20 solo albums and has ventured into film composing, collaborating with Hans Zimmer for the movie *The Burning Plain*.

STEPHEN STILLS

When Dallas-born aspiring folkie Stephen Stills settled into the Laurel Canyon neighborhood of L.A. in the mid Sixties, he was on the cusp of a musical revolution that rivaled Liverpool. His is a career that can be measured in milestones: As a member of seminal folk-rock band Buffalo Springfield, he wrote and sang the enduring anti-war anthem "For What It's Worth." With the enormously popular supergroup Crosby, Stills & Nash (and sometimes Young), he contributed classics like "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes." Along the way, he recorded the historic Super Session with Mike Bloomfield and Al Cooper, worked with Hendrix and Clapton, formed another supergroup (Manassas), and continued a thriving solo career that would keep most musicians busy. As a guitarist, his astonishing versatility spans elegant yet sophisticated folk patterns, scorching shred improvs, deep Delta blues and anything else his muse dictates.

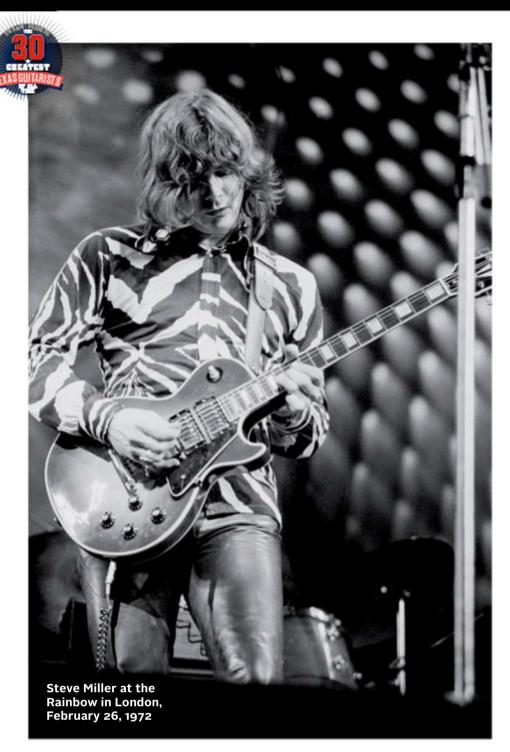
DAVID GRISSOM

In the pantheon of journeymen guitarists, few have had a career as rich and varied as David Grissom. After moving to Austin (from his native Louisville, Kentucky) in 1983, Grissom joined Joe Ely's band for a six-year stint, after which he became a member of John Mellencamp's group from 1991 through 1994. From there, he went on to tour or record with the Allman Brothers, the Dixie Chicks, Robben Ford, Chris Isaak, Buddy Guy, Bob Dylan and John McMurtry, among others. Along the way, he recorded four solo albums and was part of the band Storyville, which included Tommy Shannon and Chris Layton from Double Trouble. Schooled in blues, jazz, rock and country, Grissom is one of music's true chameleons, able to tailor his own distinctive sound to suit the song and artist.

CHARLIE SEXTON

Young Charlie Sexton could have folded when his much-hyped major-label debut, 1985's Pictures for Pleasure, failed to make him the next Billy Idol. But the Texas-born guitarist was built for better things, and blues ran through his blood. By his midteens, he was already a prodigy who could hold his own with the Vaughan brothers and other Austin greats at that city's famed nightclub, Antone's.

In 1992, he rebounded mightily with his band, the Arc Angles, which included Doyle Bramhall II and the Double Trouble rhythm section, before beginning a long tenure as Bob Dylan's lead guitarist. Able to switch from fiery Hendrixian leads to swampy delta blues to even Celtic-tinged folk rock, he's become an in-demand sideman and producer. Recently, he reunited the Arc Angels for a string of shows in Texas.



T FOR TEXAS

LONG BEFORE HE FLEW LIKE AN EAGLE, **STEVE MILLER** LEARNED HIS FIRST BLUES LICKS — LITERALLY AT THE FOOT OF THE MASTER, **T-BONE WALKER BY ALAN PAUL**

TEVE MILLER IS best known as the creator of classic rock staples like "The Joker," "Fly Like an Eagle," "Rock'n Me" and "Jungle Love." The Steve Miller Band's *Greatest Hits 1974-78* collection has sold more than 13 million copies, making it one of the top-selling rock albums of all time. But before all of that, Miller, who grew up in Dallas,

began his career as a bluesman — and he is thoughtful and insightful about the music's history.

Miller considers T-Bone
Walker to be the father of modern blues guitar, and he has an extra-personal reason for making sure the Texas great's legacy is properly respected; Walker was a family friend who taught the nine-year-old future legend his first licks. He was happy to share his thoughts about the blues icon.

"YOU KNOW
WHAT'S REALLY
CRAZY? LES
PAUL TAUGHT
ME MY FIRST
CHORDS IN
MILWAUKEE,
AND T-BONE
WALKER
TAUGHT ME
HOW TO PLAY
LEAD WHEN I
WAS NINE"

What makes T-Bone such an important figure in the history of the electric guitar?

It's all about the changeover from country blues to city blues. T-Bone was one of the very first guys who played electric guitar, along with Charlie Christian, who was a good friend of his. When T-Bone bought his Gibson guitar in 1936, it changed everything! T-Bone was the first guy through the gate and he was maybe the smartest, the most sophisticated and most interesting musically. He's like the Duke Ellington of country blues.

He watched jazz guys and picked up chords, and all of a sudden he's written "Stormy Monday Blues." That changed the way electric blues is played. Nobody else played anything like that, and he opened the door. A whole lot of people said, "I want to do that." B.B. King, Freddie King, Albert King, Eric Clapton, Jeff Beck, Stevie Ray Vaughan and every other blues and rock electric guitarist who has come down the pike started there.

You go from the staccato jazz licks to the fat, soaring Albert King lead guitar and, of course, Chuck Berry, the father of rock guitar whose primary licks all came from T-Bone.

But he wasn't actually the first guy to play an electric guitar.

Les Paul had built an electric guitar and amplifier and was recording with Bing Crosby, and it was all brand-new stuff. T-Bone heard that and adapted. Before that, he was playing banjo because it would cut through the orchestra, and that explains a lot about his playing. When he first started doing the splits and all that, he was doing it with a banjo!

He started figuring out the instrument by just going, "Hmm, electric guitar... what is this?" He was very sophisticated, hanging out in New York when Charlie Christian was revolutionizing music with Benny Goodman at Carnegie Hall. They were living in the same building. Charlie was really sick with tuberculosis, and he would just come home and play all night — and then in a minute he was gone. T-Bone was also a showman who spoke about his performance as an act. He ran across the stage and slid on the floor and squatted down and played behind his head. All that stuff really came from him as well. Of course, Chuck Berry was also a brilliant performer and he had an act, just like T-Bone Walker had an act. He duckwalked and had the greatest lyrics for kids, and he had Johnnie Johnson playing boogie-woogie piano behind him and he had learned all of his T-Bone stuff.

How'd you meet T-Bone as a kid?

My father was a pathologist who ran the lab at a hospital in Dallas where T-Bone received treatment for severe stomach ulcers in the late Forties, early Fifties, when no one knew what ulcers were or how to fix them. My father was a

music nut and he had a tape recorder, which was like having something from Mars back then. He became friends with T-Bone, who became a visitor at our house, and played a couple of times, which my father recorded in 1951 and '52. This was T-Bone Walker at his peak doing 17 songs that he didn't record for a label. T-Bone was a sweet, patient man and a brilliant musician, and I got to sit at his feet and watch him play for five or six hours at a time.

You know what's really crazy? Les Paul taught me my first chords in Milwaukee, T-Bone taught me how to play lead when I was nine, and I ended up recording with Chuck Berry and backing him up in California. I ended up with all these guys.

I imagine that a Black musician hanging out at your house in Dallas caused some issues in 1951.

Oh, veah. Dallas was completely segregated. We moved there from Milwaukee when I was five. And my parents always had a lot of musician friends. Les Paul was my godfather and he used to come around the house all the time, and so did people like Charles Mingus and Tal Farlow. They'd come to town, play hip gigs Saturday night and have lunch at our house on Sunday.

But in Texas, we went through all sorts of stuff. My father was sort of considered a communist and he was arrested and handcuffed, with his picture on the front page of the newspaper for having a "race party" in his lab because he had a holiday party that included Black lab technicians. They made him sound like a real sleazy guy, but my dad was a great guy and real smart. Everybody loved my mom, so it was hard to be mad at them. One thing that helped them is we Texans loved our music, so it was normal to be into jazz, and Carl Perkins and T-Bone Walker and Bob Wills, GW



ST. VINCENT

Just when the world needed a new postmodern guitar hero, along came Annie Clark (aka St. Vincent), who turned things upside-down with an inventive approach that mixes metaltinged two-handed tapping with dynamic, effects-drenched soundscapes on deeply personal songs that veer from jazz-pop to electronica to sophisticated indie rock. Born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, she grew up in Dallas, Texas, and started playing guitar at age 12. After studying at Berklee College of Music, she released her daring debut, Marry Me, and never looked back. She's issued five more provocative albums (her latest is 2021's Daddy's Home), and in 2014 she fronted Nirvana for the band's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction. Since 2016, she's collaborated with Ernie Ball Music Man on her own signature guitars.

BUDDY HOLLY

A towering figure in rock 'n' roll, Buddy Holly had an immeasurable impact on young musicians in the late Fifties and early Sixties, most notably John Lennon and Paul McCartney, who were inspired by Holly to write their own material. Among his many innovations, Holly created the template for the now-standard rock lineup of two guitars, bass and drums.

Born Charles Hardin Holley in Lubbock, Texas, Holly (who later dropped the "e" from his surname) played guitar to country and western, blues and gospel in his early years, and by the age of 16 he went pro. Backed by his band the Crickets, he issued a string of magical singles – among them "Peggy Sue," "That'll Be the Day," "Not Fade Away," "Maybe Baby" and "It's So Easy." As a guitarist, he popularized the Fender Stratocaster, and his energetic. twangy playing style - emphasizing downstrokes on the top three strings — seamlessly mixed rhythm and lead. Tragically, he died in

1959 at age 22 in a plane crash that also took the lives of Richie Valens and the Big Bopper.

LARRY CORYELL

Galveston-born jazz guitarist Larry Coryell was called the "godfather of fusion," and with good reason — his mid-to-late Sixties recordings with the pioneering jazz-rock band the Free Spirits, followed by his work with the Gary Burton Quartet — ushered in a revolution in which players mixed straight jazz with rock, as well as Latin and eastern music. Among his many solo albums, his 1971 record Barefoot Boy is cited as a game changer that proved how jazz could be as edgy and exciting as rock. During his career, Coryell formed the fusion ensemble the Eleventh House, and with John McLaughlin and Paco de Lucia, he was onethird of the Guitar Trio. Following two performances at New York City's Iridium Jazz Club, he passed away from heart failure in February 2017.

HERB ELLIS

Born in 1921 and raised near Dallas, jazz guitarist Herb Ellis rose to fame in 1940s and Fifties, first with the Jimmy Dorsey band and then, more prominently, as part of the Oscar Peterson Trio. Performing with his staple guitar, a 1953 Gibson ES-175, Ellis was revered for his fluid, beautifully phrased single-note lines in which he combined elements of bebop and blues. During his career, he recorded with Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, Billie Holiday and Ella Fitzgerald, among others, and with Barney Kessel, Charlie Byrd and Tal Farlow, he created a supergroup called the Great Guitars. On his own, he released dozens of albums, including the classics Ellis in Wonderland (1956) and Two for the Road (with Joe Pass, 1974). Ellis passed away in 2010. **6**

DOZEN

EMULATE **DIMEBAG DARRELL**'S BLISTERING RIFF-WRITING STYLE AND LEAD-PLAYING TECHNIQUES WITH THIS SIX PACK OF DIME-INSPIRED RIFFS AND LICKS BY CHARLIE GRIFFITHS

HE LATE, GREAT Dimebag Darrell Abbott continues to be one of both Texas' and modern metal's most celebrated and influential guitarists. His bone-crunching powerchord and single-note riffs, hauntingly beautiful clean, mellow arpeggio passages and wailing, goosebump-inducing leads, as featured in such Pantera classics as "Cowboys from Hell," "Floods," "This Love," "Cemetery Gates," "Primal Concrete Sledge," "5 Minutes Alone" and others, continue to inspire metal and hard rock guitarists the world over. In this lesson, we present a handful of short, Dime-influenced phrases that offer insight into the legendary guitarist's unique, innovative style.

Dimebag's lead playing was characterized by slick, wide-stretch legato passages, fast alternate picking and his trademark screaming natural and artificial "pinch" harmonics and gut-wrenching whammy bar manipulations, often underpinned with an aggressive Texas blues flavor. Mastering Dime's lead style will take time and practice, so play these musical examples slowly at first, and focus on accuracy and clean note production above speed.



FIGURE 1: POWER CHORD RIFFING

A signature element of Dimebag's supertight rhythm playing style was his use of quickly shifting power chords and syncopated rhythms, with chord changes occurring in unexpected and interesting ways, relative to the beat. This first example has you shifting root-5th-octave power chords up chromatically, with an emphasis on the eighth-note upbeat of beat 2, where the pattern skips back to the first chord (E5)

before continuing on up to G#5 in 4th position by the end of the bar. Strive to keep a steady eighth-note rhythm as the phrasing "hiccups" and restarts on an upbeat.

FIGURE 2: PICKING, LEGATO & WIDE STRETCHES

This sinewy lick is performed entirely on the high E string and requires an insanely wide fret-hand stretch to reach all the notes while performing combinations of pulloffs and hammer-ons. Allow your fret hand

to rotate radically, to reach the lowest and highest notes.

An alternative, much less demanding performance option would be to tap the highest note (B, 19th fret) with your pick hand and pick only the first note. This would enable you to use a more compact, comfortable fret-hand fingering.

FIGURE 3: BLUES-SCALE & POWER GROOVES

Bars 1 and 2 of this example demonstrate Dime-style usage of the E blues scale (E, G, A, B $^{\flat}$, B, D) to create a powerful, sinister-sounding low-string single-note riff. The F note at the end of bar 2, which is the $^{\flat}$ 2, or $^{\flat}$ 9, relative to the implied E root note, lends the riff an even more ominous flavor. Bars 3 and 4 form an odd-time power groove in $^{7}_{8}$ meter. Count the eighth notes in these bars as follows: "one, two, three, four, five, six, sev."

FIGURE 4: SCREAMING HARMONICS

Use a high-gain tone and your guitar's bridge pickup here (preferably a humbucker) to bring out the sound of the natural harmonics (N.H.) The fractional numbers "3.2" and "2.7" represent the locations of natural harmonics that fall between certain frets. These harmonics are trickier to find and sound clearly than those that fall directly above the 12th, 7th, 5th, and 4th frets. You'll want to seek out each of these elusive harmonics by "hunting and pecking" lightly touching the string with your fret-hand finger and gradually moving it, like a metal detector, up and down the length of the string between the frets you repeatedly pick downstrokes.

FIGURE 5: CLEAN ARPEGGIOS

An often overlooked aspect of Dime's playing is his great use of mellow clean-tone arpeggios, as heard in the previously mentioned songs "This Love" and "Floods." These quiet passages served to make heavy sections seem more brutal by comparison. Hold your fretting fingers down to let each note ring for as long as possible, and make sure your fingers "stand tall," so as to not inadvertently bump into and mute an adjacent, ringing open string.

FIGURE 6: WIDE-STRETCH SCALAR RUNS

FIG. 1 Power Chord Riffing

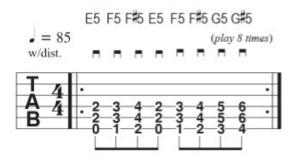


FIG. 2 Picking, Legato & Wide Stretches

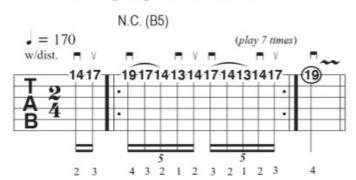


FIG. 3 Blues-scale and Power Grooves

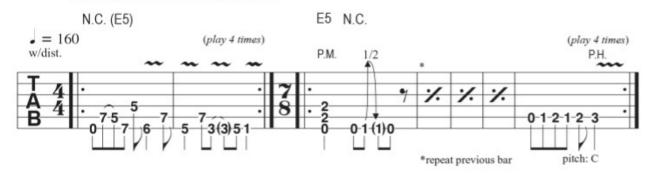


FIG. 4 Screaming Harmonics

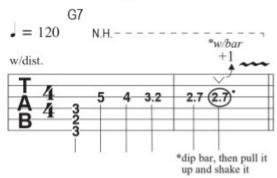


FIG. 5 Clean Arpeggios

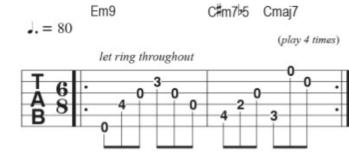
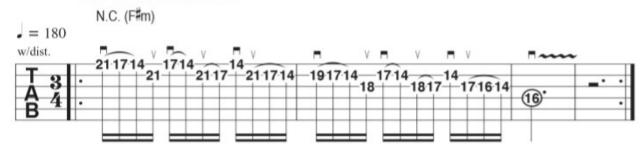


FIG. 6 Wide-stretch Scalar Runs



DIMEBAG'S
INNOVATIVE LEAD
PLAYING WAS OFTEN
UNDERPINNED WITH
AN AGGRESSIVE
TEXAS BLUES
FLAVOR

Dime had large hands and exceptional dexterity, which he harnessed to perform wide-stretch double pull-offs in many of his lead phrases. Our lick here is played in the key of F# minor and utilizes, in bar 1, notes from the F# minor hexatonic scale (F#, G#, A, B, C#, E) and, in bar 2, notes from the F# blues scale (F#, A, B, C, C#, E). Use your 1st, 2nd and 4th fingers for the extreme stretches. Practice the descending pattern in bar 1 slowly and gradually build speed as you gain confidence. Do the same with bar 2, then work on connecting the two bars into one continuous, fluid phrase. w

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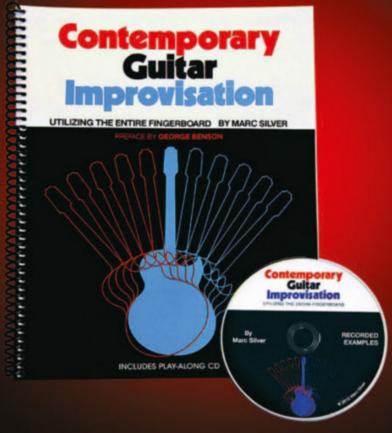
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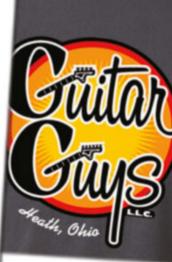


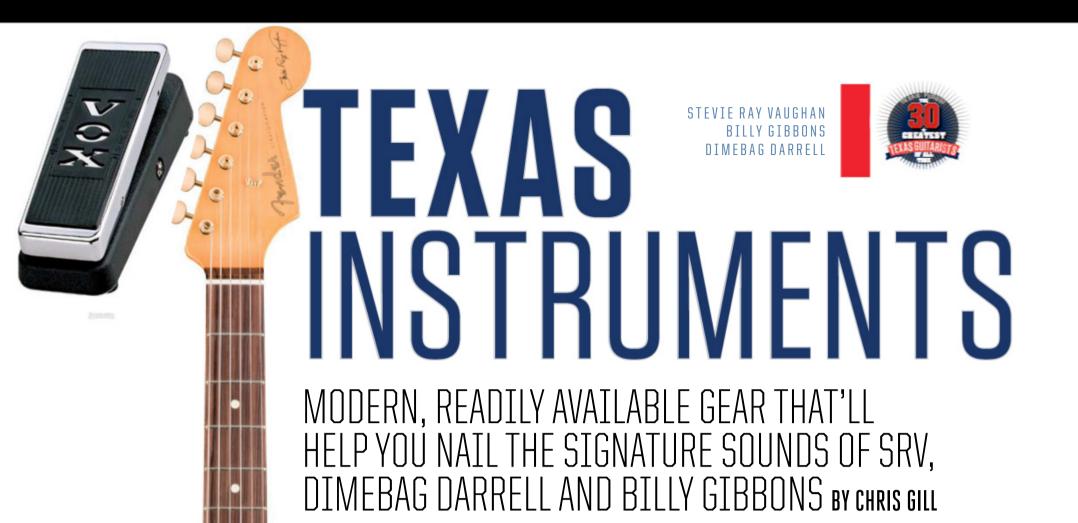
Makes a

Great Gift







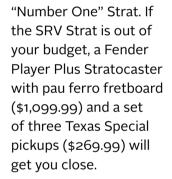


STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN: THE WHAM OF THAT TEXAS MAN!

STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN STRATOCASTER

(\$2,049.99)

With features like a lefthand vibrato tailpiece and 6105 frets, this guitar is modeled after Stevie's



FENDER '65 SUPER REVERB

(\$2,049.99)

Stevie used a wide variety of amps, including Marshalls, Fender Vibroverbs and Dumbles, the latter now costing as much as a starter home. However, Fender Super Reverbs were pretty consistently found in his backline from the club days through arena shows. It's also one of the few amps Stevie used for clean and overdrive tones.

IBANEZ TS9 TUBE SCREAMER

(\$109.99)

From the TS-808 through the TS10, Stevie used them all, but the Ibanez TS9 Tube Screamer was the mainstay on his pedalboard for most of his career peak from 1982 onwards.

VOX V847-A WAH (\$99.99)

Stevie's Vox wah allegedly originally belonged to Jimi Hendrix. Appropriately, Stevie used his often when performing Hendrix covers.

DUNLOP JHF1 JIMI HENDRIX FUZZ FACE (\$159.99)

The Fuzz Face was a late addition to Stevie's pedalboard, starting in 1988 when he wanted to duplicate Jimi's tone more accurately.

ELECTRO-HARMONIX LESTER G DELUXE (\$272.10)

This pedal is an affordable and portable alternative to the Fender Vibratone rotating speaker cabinet that Stevie used on "Cold Shot" and "Couldn't Stand the Weather."



BILLY GIBBONS: MASTER OF SPARKS

EPIPHONE 1959 LES PAUL **STANDARD (\$899.99)**

Can't afford six figures for an original 1959 Les Paul Standard like Pearly Gates? This model will take you about 90 percent of the way there, with tone and good looks that will get your mojo workin'. Pop a Seymour **Duncan Pearly Gates** humbucker (\$119) in the bridge and you'll shout "have mercy!"

FENDER VINTERA '50S STRATOCASTER (\$1,099.99)

The Rev is rightfully known for his righteous fat humbucker tones, but his slinky Strat tones are mighty fine, too ("Heard It on the X," "Apologies to Pearly," most of the Deguello album). A Fifties-style Strat with maple fretboard does the job so nicely you'll want to thank us.

BLACKSTAR HT CLUB 40 MARK II 1X12 40-WATT COMBO (\$899.99)

Mr. Gibbons is a man of many tones, but one of the closest to his heart is the overdrive growl of a vintage Marshall as played by his favorite British blues legends. This Blackstar combo delivers the goods at a price that won't give you the blues.

FENDER PRO JUNIOR IV 1X10 15-WATT COMBO (\$649.99)

For clean tones and authentic blues tones, Gibbons will often employ a tweed Fender from his prodigious vintage collection. The Fender Pro Junior IV covers that ground nicely.

ANALOG MAN BEANO BOOST RANGEMASTER (\$185)

The Rev started using a Beano Boost a few years back to replicate the midrange growl of his favorite classic British blues tracks.

MXR TIMMY OVERDRIVE (\$129.99)

Another recent Billy G fave. When enough ain't enough, step on this and stand back.

DUNLOP SIETE SANTOS OCTAVIO FUZZ (\$199.99)

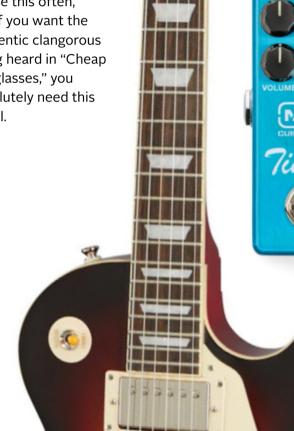
Billy is a consummate consumer of fuzz. In collaboration with

"Combinations of multiple effects are man-ageable when using a slight edge from each, which avoids the unwanted collision of tones,"
Gibbons told us
in 2013. "However, at this point,
sometimes the
grind of excessive noise becomes its own thing!"

Dunlop, he designed this fabulous fuzz to freak out the riff-raff. Hallelujah!

ELECTRO-HARMONIX RING THING (\$271.20)

You may not need to use this often, but if you want the authentic clangorous clang heard in "Cheap Sunglasses," you absolutely need this pedal.







DIMEBAG DARRELL: PROUD TO BE LOUD

DEAN DIMEBAG DEAN FROM HELL CFH (\$929)

This model was recently discontinued after Dean and Dimebag's estate severed their relationship in 2021, so it may be scarce. The Dean ML 79 Floyd Rose (\$629) with a Seymour Duncan Dimebag (SH13 Dimebucker/'59) humbucking pickup set (\$238) is a decent alternative until the new company offering an official Dimebag signature model is announced.

RANDALL RG1003H HEAD (\$789.99)

All of the Randall and Krank amp models that Dimebag originally used are discontinued and hard to find, but the RG1003H comes pretty close to the Randall RG100ES he used with Pantera through the mid Nineties. Pair it with a 4x12 cabinet loaded with Eminence Texas Heat speakers (\$124.99 each).

MASTER EFFECTS EQFH (\$229)

Furman PQ3 and PQ4 parametric equalizer

rack units played crucial roles in shaping Dimebag's tone in conjunction with his solid-state Randall amps. Master Effects, a boutique pedal company from Canada, makes a great affordable version of the PQ3 in a convenient pedal format.

MXR M109S SIX BAND EQ (\$99.99)

An MXR Six-Band Graphic EQ was an essential part of Dimebag's sophisticated midrange sculpting strategy, along with the Furman.

DIGITECH WHAMMY 5 (\$269.99)

Dime used a Whammy pedal often after he discovered it while recording Far Beyond Driven starting with "Becoming" and beyond.

DIMEBAG CRY BABY FROM HELL WAH (\$199.99)

Dimebag had a pair of Cry Baby wahs on his pedalboard, with his signature Cry Baby from Hell being his first choice.

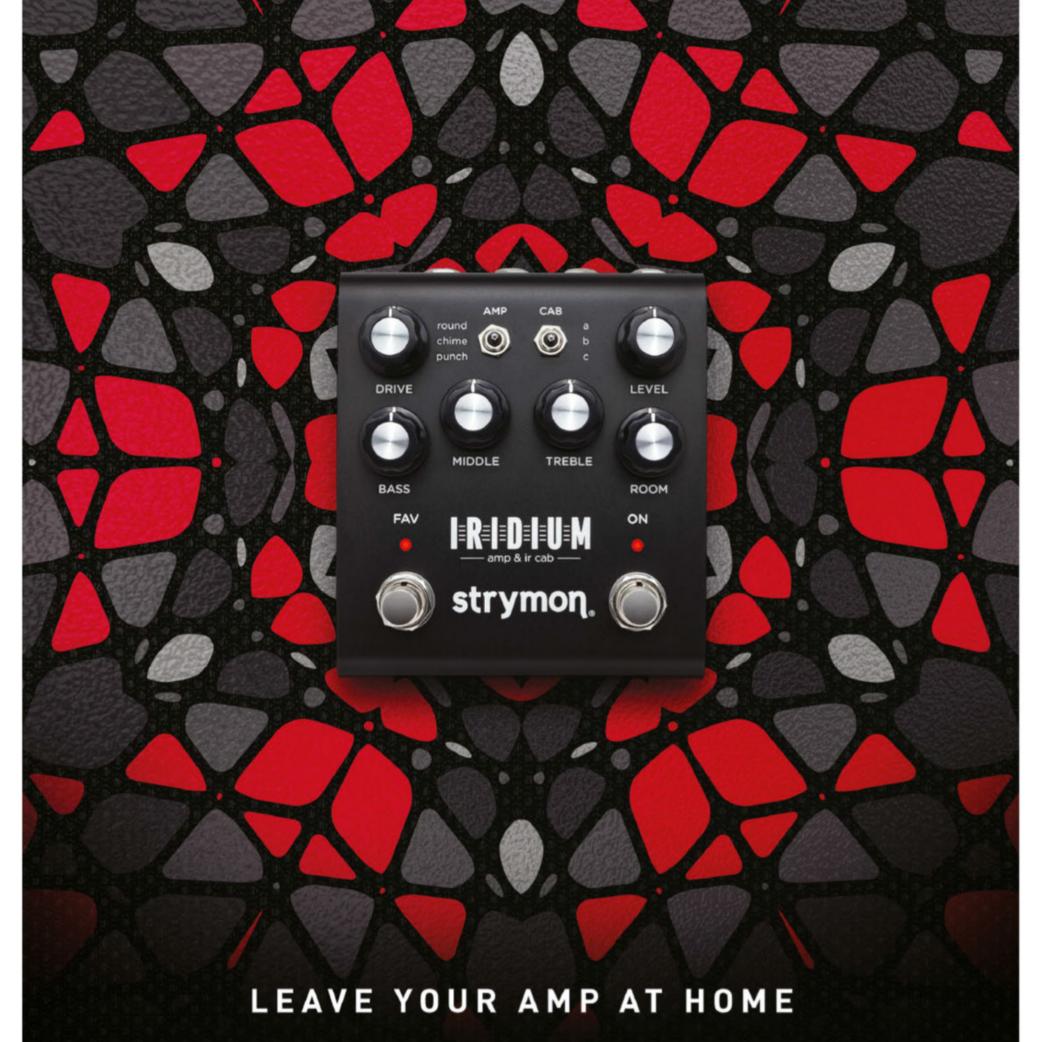
BOSS SD-1 SUPER OVERDRIVE (\$62.99)

Another fixture on Dime's pedalboard was an MXR Zakk Wylde Overdrive that he used for leads. That pedal is discontinued, but it's based upon the good old Boss SD-1 Super Overdrive that has been available for decades. "A lot of guitarists tend to only use harmonics when they want to make weird noises with their whammy bars," Dime wrote in the pages of GW. "Two of my favorite players — Eddie Van Halen and Randy Rhoads — did some real happening things with harmonics without reaching for their bars!"



six band eq





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"STEVIE COULD BE VERY FINICKY ABOUT HIS EQUIPMENT, BUT HE DIDN'T APPROACH THINGS FROM A TECHNICAL POINT OF VIEW - EITHER IT FELT RIGHT OR IT DIDN'T" - RICHARD MULLEN

Stevie Ray Vaughan in action at the Warfield Theatre in San Francisco,

November 24, 1984

CLAYTON CALL REDFERNS



IN THE STUDIO, NO ONE WAS CLOSER TO STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN THAN HIS HANDPICKED PRODUCER/ENGINEER, RICHARD MULLEN.
IN THIS EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW FROM 2003, MULLEN DETAILS HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH SRV AND HOW HE CAPTURED THE OTHERWORLDLY GUITAR SOUNDS ON TEXAS FLOOD AND COULDN'T STAND THE WEATHER

"IF YOU GOT close enough to Stevie while he was doing his thing, it was almost like he was in a trance, like something else was playing through him." The late producer/engineer Richard Mullen—the man behind the boards for Texas Flood, Couldn't Stand the Weather, Soul to Soul, In Step, The Sky Is Crying and Live at Carnegie Hall—was well-equipped to speak about the

power and glory of Stevie Ray Vaughan. "On the spot, Stevie could play things that he'd never done before, like he was tapped into a higher plane. His level of precision and expertise was flawless.

In this rare 2003 interview, Mullen describes his approach to recording Stevie, as well as their close working relationship over the course of SRV's life.

CLAYTON CALL/REDFERNS

A guitarist and pedal steel player, Mullen (1953-2019) moved to Austin in the early Seventies, and in 1976 connected with a young SRV, initiating a fruitful relationship that lasted throughout Stevie's career.

In conversation, Mullen's respect and admiration for Stevie's artistry is overflowing. "He played on at least a 95 to 98 percent level of perfection all the time. In the studio, whether he would 'bring it' was not even an issue. He was fearless when it came to playing, and he always played well." Regarding Texas Flood and Couldn't Stand the Weather, Mullen says, "Every take was based on Stevie's performance; if he exploded on the track, that's the one we used. On every record I made with him, the final product consisted primarily of live takes, which is something above and beyond what most musicians are capable of."

How did you first meet Stevie?

I was playing in an original band in Austin called Denim, and the main place we played was the Rome Inn, where we often crossed paths with Stevie when he was with Paul Ray and the Cobras. This is where Stevie and I had our first conversations; he was very shy and I think the first three times we spoke, we had exactly the same conversation! I often ran sound at the Rome Inn during those days, and I would record the shows. I was running sound one night when Paul Ray had gotten sick, and this was literally the very first time Stevie came out as the front man, doing all the singing. You could see where he was headed. Unfortunately, that tape was stolen!

Stevie was always one of my favorite people to go hear, but his soundmen were so bad. If I was planning to see him, I'd go down to the club in the afternoon and do the sound check so that it would sound reasonable when I went to see him that night.

You did this for selfish reasons, then?

In a way, yes; [Laughs] I did want it to sound as good as possible, and he noticed it sounded better when I came down. I eventually moved into live sound and studio work entirely, and I began doing live sound for him in '81.

Was Stevie working with his manager, **Chesley Millikin, at this point?**

Yes. Chesley hooked us up with recording Texas Flood at Jackson Browne's studio, which may have happened because he was dating Jackson's sister. That was the connection to us ending up in L.A. at Jackson's studio. Chesley was not a huge fan of mine and he did everything in his

power to keep me away from that session, but he failed!

Was Texas Flood the first time you recorded Stevie in the studio?

I had used Stevie on some of my own sessions; one was for a singer/songwriter named Vince Bell, and I brought Stevie in to do some slide work. The session that turned out to be Texas Flood was the first time I worked with Stevie on a session of his own.

Did you squeeze into the milk truck for the trip out to L.A.? [Stevie, Chris Layton and Tommy Shannon traveled from Austin to L.A. in a converted milk truck, which was the band's van — GW Ed.]

No, thankfully! Stevie and I had planned to go together, but Chesley wasn't going to pay my way out there. Coincidentally, I was already in L.A. in the studio with Christopher Cross.

We met Chesley at Jackson's studio, and Cheslev had a heart attack when he saw me! The main reason he wanted me out of the picture was that he didn't want to ruffle any feathers. But it turned out that the engineer there, Greg Ladanyi, wasn't really interested in the session. Once he'd set things up, he had the assistant run the 24-track machine and that was it. I was just standing in the corner with my hands in my pockets.

They'd done some recording to get sounds, and Stevie kept looking at me, like, "Help!" He wasn't happy with how it was going, so I said, "Stevie, you are the only one here with any clout; you can change things if you want to." Stevie was always shy back in those days, so a few more hours went by. After going out for some food, we came back and Greg was gone. Stevie went up to the assistant engineer and said, "I brought this guy with me from Texas to do this recording, and we'd really like him to work on it." The assistant said, "I'm just here to punch 'Play' and 'Record,' so go ahead and do whatever you need to do."

I revamped everything and basically started from scratch: I tuned the drums, set up the guitar and bass, re-did the mic placement, re-EQ-ed the board and got new, better sounds for everything. My goal was to make Stevie as happy as possible with his guitar tone, to the point of setting the tones on his amp a certain way. Once I had changed everything around, they were all happy; all they had to do was go in and play. Whatever they had recorded previously was scrapped.

Did you use just one 24-track machine?

Yes, but I was really interested in doing it in a 16-track/two-inch format. This way, I could play the tape on my 16-track back home [at Riverside Sound] to record the vocals, which is what we ended up doing. You can convert a 24 to a 16 with "head stacks," but there wasn't time to get into this. Stevie's setup was simple, so we only used 14 tracks.

We had recorded one track and were listening to it when Jackson walked in. He took one look at me and said, "What's going on?" After listening to what we'd done he said, "I don't know exactly what's going on here but it sounds 100 times better than when I left. You obviously know what you're doing, so the studio is yours for tonight and tomorrow." It was late by then so we broke it down till the next day, without having recorded anything to speak of.

What other changes had you made to the set-up?

For one, I put a few go-bos [partitions] between the instruments just to prevent the loudness of the guitar amps from killing the drum tracks; it was pretty much an open space. I wanted the band's "reality" to be as close as possible to what they were used to when they played live. As a matter of fact, I didn't even let them use headphones.

I also wanted them to *play* like it was a gig, with the same sense of abandon. In the studio, if you give a musician the chance to think about what they are doing, there's a good chance they'll mess up. I looked at their 14-song set list and said, "Let's go through the tunes just like a set." I wanted it to feel as un-studio-like as possible.

Did Stevie sing at all?

Only as a cue for the tunes; he knew it wasn't for keeps.

How did you mic the instruments?

Just one mic on everything. I used two Shure SM-57's on his guitar amps: one on a Fender Vibraverb with a 15-inch Altec Lansing speaker, and one on a Dumble 4x12 bottom with EV's with a Dumble head. Stevie played through two Vibraverbs, but I only mic'd one of the speakers in one of them. I positioned the mics about three or four inches off the cabinet at about a 45-degree angle off the cone.

Stevie's sound on Texas Flood has been primarily attributed to the Dumble. How did he discover this unusual amplifier?

Just prior to the session, I had stumbled across Jackson's Dumble at a repair shop/ rehearsal studio and was blown away by it. This turned out to be Howard Dumble's shop. He and I got together and designed an amp for Christopher Cross called the Steel String Singer, which became an essential part of Stevie's setup for the rest of his career. Eric Johnson used this same amp for many years, too.

Did Stevie use the same setup for all of the songs on Texas Flood?

Yes. The only effect he used was an Ibanez Tube Screamer.

Did he use only one guitar for all of the songs?

I believe he used only his main guitar, "Number One," for the whole record, though he might have used his brown stain/maple neck Strat for "Lenny." I was very vocal about him using "Number One" because I think he had the most authority and the best sound on it.

He would punch that guitar and it would respond in a way that was the Stevie Ray Vaughan sound.

There was a depth to the sound of that guitar — he could slam it or pick it gently, and it always had a huge tone. The whole record was recorded in two hours — as long as it took to play 14 songs twice. There was no evaluation of the whole thing other than that they were happy with the way it sounded.

Was Stevie attuned to the technical aspects of recording?

Not at that time, but he did become more attuned later. Stevie could be very finicky about his equipment, but he didn't approach things from a technical point of view — either it felt right or it didn't.

One effect he used when we mixed *Texas Flood* was this Roland delay/chorus [Dimension D] that gave a little bit of a growl sound. It was a stereo device that created phasing effects, which you can hear on the solo to "Mary Had a Little Lamb" and the end solo on "Pride and Joy." Stevie sat at the board and brought that effect in and out as the song progressed. He used the same effect on Couldn't Stand the Weather, too.

What happened after you finished recording at Jackson's?

We took the tapes to Riverside Sound in Austin, and a few weeks later he came in to record the vocals. I gave Stevie two tracks to work with, and he would cut the vocal part for each song twice. We would use either the best of the two tracks or do a quick "comp" ["Comping" tracks means to edit parts together from different takes.]

Overall, there was no finagling of any-



thing on Texas Flood; it was about as live and true to a performance as it could be. When we were done, I did some mixes and ran off a cassette for Stevie. Those are the mixes that John Hammond heard, who immediately got Stevie a record deal.

At the time, did you feel you'd recorded a great album, or was it more that it was just a good representation of the band?

We felt we'd done a good job, but it was viewed as a demo that would be used to try to get a deal. Hammond heard it and said, "This is great; let's just release this."

Do you believe the bare simplicity of Texas Flood allowed Stevie's personality to shine through so clearly?

That's right; there were no overdubs, and here he was, basically live. That's why I wanted him to approach it like a gig from the beginning, because I knew what he was capable of. I wanted them to feel as comfortable as possible, and I think that comes across when you listen to the record.

One of the most important tracks in Stevie's career is his incendiary cover of Jimi Hendrix's "Voodoo Child (Slight Return)," recorded during the CSTW sessions. Stevie was able to tap into Jimi's spirit without sacrificing his own signature style and sound.

"Voodoo Chile" is a song they'd been doing live for a few years; it's not like they worked it up just for that record. And I pushed him to record it, because when he played "Voodoo Child" live, he brought a life force to the song that no one else could possibly do.

Stevie played "Voodoo Chile" with so much soul and so much spirit — he nailed every note and every nuance. That take was live from beginning to end, and it's seven minutes of pure guitar energy without a single miscue. It would be hard to find anyone that could play guitar that way without some sort of mistake here or there, but he blew right through it. That fact that he could pull everything off with such precision is the very thing that allowed us to make the albums the way we did.

What are your feelings today about Texas Flood and CSTW?

I would say I like the second one a little more than the first. Texas Flood was Stevie's introduction to the world, but, to me, that's the Stevie I'd known for six years. He was just playing blues and shuffles, but of course he was playing it like no one had ever played it. On Couldn't Stand the Weather, Stevie was coming into his own and branching out into things that were more ambitious. Lincoln Clapp came up to me during the Couldn't Stand the Weather sessions and said, "You did such a great job on Texas Flood — everything is so consistent." And I laughed and said, "No wonder, because in the two hours it took to cut it, not a knob was moved!"

I would never have been involved with Stevie if I didn't have my own passion for what he was doing. I did those sound checks in the early days because it was his gig, and I wanted to be there. I've always loved his playing so much."

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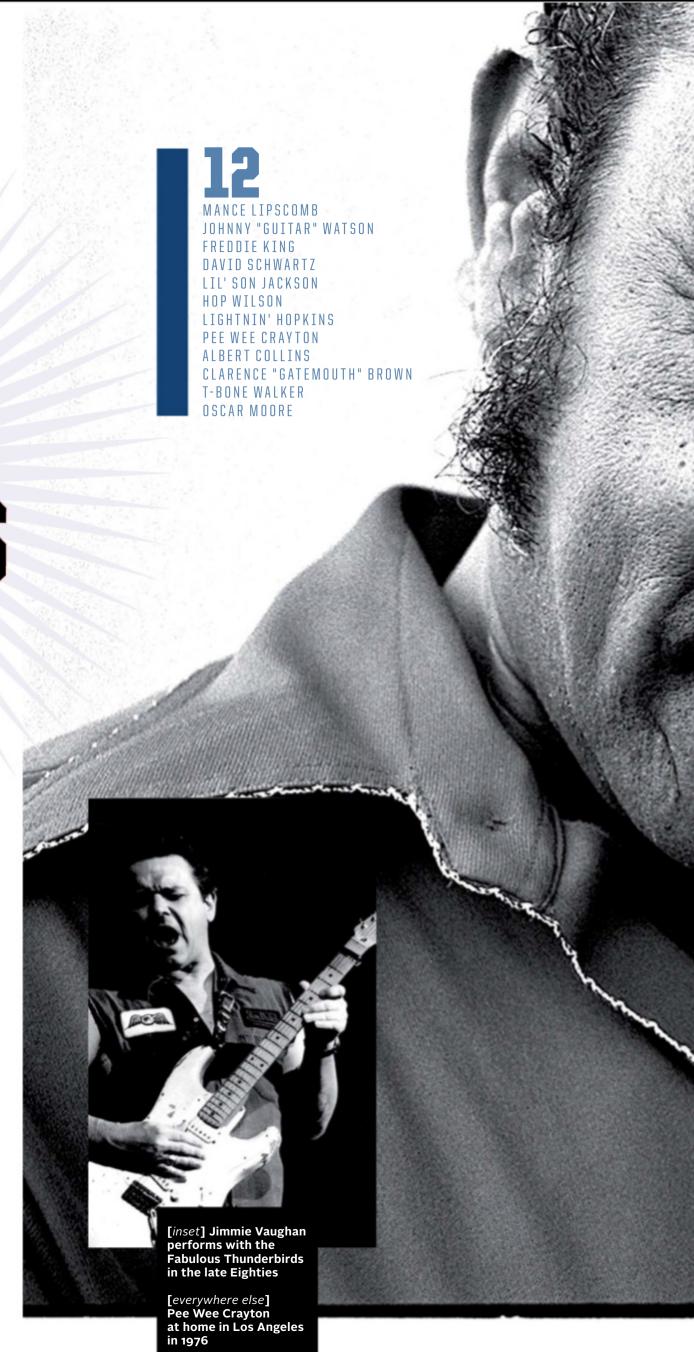


EXTRA JIMMIES

JIMMIE VAUGHAN CHOOSES HIS TOP 12 TEXAS BLUES GUITARISTS

IMMIE VAUGHAN IS the sound of Texas blues guitar. Long before he burst onto the national and international scene with the Fabulous Thunderbirds in the early Eighties, Jimmie was playing juke joints, bars and clubs all over Texas from the age of 15, sharing stages and playing with Muddy Waters, Freddie King, Jimi Hendrix and many others. No guitarist is better equipped to lay down the law on the most essential Texas blues guitarists in history, and below, he picks out 12 of the greatest, most legendary players that originate from the Lone Star State. In Jimmie's words, "This is a serious list."

BY ANDY ALEDORT





OSCAR MOORE

Oscar Moore (1915-1981) is well known as the effortlessly swinging guitarist in the Nat King Cole Trio, with whom he recorded for a decade, from 1937 to 1947, cutting classic solos for the essential Cole tracks "Gee Baby, Ain't I Good to You," "Moonlight in Vermont," "Sweet Lorraine" and many others.

"Oscar was originally from Austin," Jimmie says. "He moved to L.A. to find his fame, as did many other guitarists, like T-Bone Walker. To me, the quintessential Oscar Moore track is, 'Nature Boy,' live with Nat King Cole. Top that! He's incredible. He was a great jazz guitar player and a great blues guitar player."

T-BONE WALKER

"T-Bone was the first guy cutting electric blues solos on the guitar, going back to the very early Forties. And you can listen to his records all the way from then till the end of his career in the Seventies, and he always pretty much played the same, with the same tone and the same level of virtuosity. He had his own tone, and was picking out single-note solos, bending strings and all that, like no one ever had before. He had that descending ninth chord thing that he did as an intro on so many tunes, and I've never heard anyone else do that. I'd heard that T-Bone and Charlie Christian, who were friends, worked the street together back in their hometown in Oklahoma." [Note: Christian was born in Bonham, Texas, but moved to Oklahoma when he was very young.]

CLARENCE "GATEMOUTH" BROWN

"There is no denying that, real early on, Gatemouth was blazing some new trails. I heard that when T-Bone started getting more hit records and would go out on the road, one of the people that replaced him in his residency in L.A. was Gatemouth. That was way back there in the early Forties. He had the capo and did everything with fingerpicking, like, 'Okie Dokie Stomp.' Just great guitar playing."

ALBERT COLLINS

"Albert had a completely original style. His F minor tuning $[FCFA \land CF]$, combined with the clamp [capo] helped him get that original sound. Everybody saw Gatemouth with the clamp, and Guitar Slim over there in Louisiana and Albert were disciples of Gatemouth. I don't know where he got the

tuning, but it could have been a hand-medown thing, as it often is. John Lee Hooker tuned to open G, which is called 'Sebastopol' or 'Spanish tuning,' and he got some very distinctive sounds and chords out of that tuning."

PEE WEE CRAYTON

Though certainly not as well known as the legendary blues guitarists B.B. King and T-Bone Walker, Pee Wee Crayton (1914-1985) is a giant of blues guitar that, in his day, was a star. His song "Blues After Hours" reached Number 1 on the Billboard R&B chart in 1948.

"Pee Wee's got to be in there with Albert Collins and Gatemouth," Jimmie states. "Blues After Hours," 'Texas Hop' and many more. Pee Wee was another incredible player. I got turned on to him and loved him immediately, and he became an influence. But if we were around back in 1948, we would have been well aware of him. He's from the Round Rock/Rockdale area, which is right near Austin. He's another guy that went out to California to make it big.

"I have the 78 of Pee Wee doing 'Country Boy,' the same song that was cut by Dave Bartholomew [Bartholomew co-wrote many of Fats Domino's biggest hits, such as "Ain't That a Shame," "Blue Monday" and "I Hear You Knockin'."], and Pee Wee's version is so great. It's a fabulous record with a great guitar solo."

LIGHTNIN' HOPKINS

"I love Lightnin' Hopkins — he was just fantastic! I got to know Lightnin' a little bit, from the shows he came to play in Dallas and Austin. He was mesmerizing to watch. I saw him play on Valentine's Day, just him by himself, at this club in Austin one night, and he changed up all of the songs. He said, "It's Valentine's Day, so this whole night, it's all for the women," and he changed the lyrics and made them up as he went along. All his songs would be good for Valentine's Day, really, if you think about it. But he'd put a woman's name in there and switch it up for the occasion. There are songs that are known as being associated with other artists that very well may have originated with Lightnin', but if he did someone else's song, he owned it — he made it his. He would talk about another Texas guitar player that he learned a lot from — Texas Alexander."

HOP WILSON

"I have to include Hop Wilson, even though he played steel guitar," Jimmie says. Hard-

ing "Hop" Wilson (1921-1975) was born in Grapeland, Texas, and was nicknamed "Hop" as a devolution of the word, "harp," for harmonica, which was his first instrument. He moved over to the steel guitar as an early teen and began recording for Goldband Records in 1957.

"'Chicken Stuff,' 'Black Cat Bone,' 'I Done Got Over,' 'I'm a Stranger' – all great tunes. 'Chicken Stuff' – is that wild, or what? When you think about the records people make now, not to be mean, but there's no comparison now to records like those for feel, attitude, sound, everything. Like anything, I guess you have to have a taste for it, but I do. I mean, how can you not like that if you like blues?"

LIL' SON JACKSON

Melvin "Lil' Son" Jackson (1915-1976) is from Tyler, Texas, and was signed to Gold Star Records, releasing "Freedom Train Blues" in 1948. It became a hit nationwide. "What a pioneer Lil' Son Jackson was," Jimmie says. "He wrote 'Rock Me Baby,' except he called it 'Rockin' and Rollin,' released back in 1950. It's basically the same lyrics as B.B. King's 'Rock Me Baby' [released by B.B. in 1964]. And also, Slim Harpo took the same basic guitar riff from 'Rockin' and Rollin' and turned it into, 'I'm a King Bee' [released in 1957]. He played in Sebastopol tuning and in standard tuning, using the capo sometimes, too."

DAVID SCHWARTZ OF THE NIGHTCAPS

Though virtually unknown nationally, Dallas' own Nightcaps became one of the most popular bands in Texas following the 1958 release of their first single, "Wine, Wine, Wine," backed with "Nightcap Rock," the latter of which was based on the hit song, "Night Train." The band consisted of four high school students, lead by vocalist/songwriter Billy Joe Shine and powered by the explosive lead guitar playing of David Schwartz (sometimes spelled Swartz). They released their second single, the hugely popular, "Thunderbird," in 1961. Legendary Texas blues/rockers ZZ Top recorded "Thunderbird' as the opening track for their Fandango! album, and Stevie Ray Vaughan recorded his cover version of "Thunderbird" early in his career.

"The Nightcaps had some really great songs, like 'Wine, Wine, Wine' and 'Thunderbird,' which Stevie and I grew up listening to and eventually learned to play," Jimmie says. "The very first album I ever bought was Wine, Wine, Wine! David

Schwartz was the lead guitar player, and right after I got that album, I tried my best to copy his leads, and I learned all the rhythm parts too, as well as the bass parts, and I even tried to play the drum parts too! So it's safe to say I really loved that record!"

FREDDIE KING

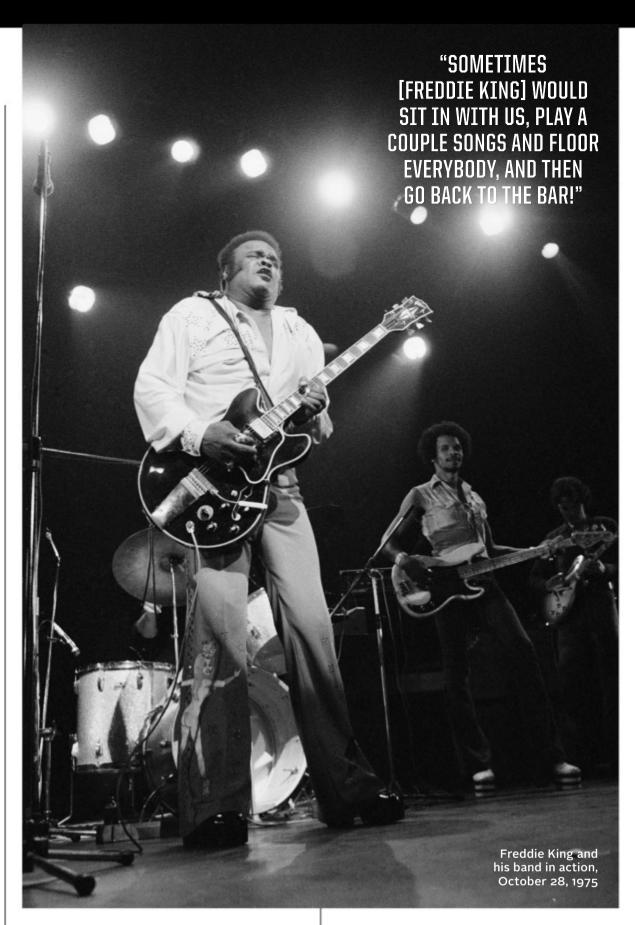
"I could talk about Freddie King for hours," Jimmie says. "Freddie learned a lot about guitar playing from Eddie Taylor, who played so brilliantly with Jimmy Reed and John Lee Hooker, and from the great Jimmy Rogers. You can tell, when he plays some of the instrumentals and some of the stuff he recorded backing up Smokey Smothers, he's basically taking the 'Eddie Taylor' role. Also, Jimmy Rogers and Eddie Taylor used thumb picks and fingerpicks, which Freddie picked up on. Then B.B. King came along, and everybody tried to play like B.B., and Freddie used elements of all of this stuff in developing his own signature sound and style. That's what was so great about Freddie – he was like a walking blues encyclopedia.

"When I was a kid, about 12 or 13, I had his Bonanza of Instrumentals album. There were three songs in Dallas that you had to know how to play regardless if you were in a country band or a rock 'n' roll band — 'Hold It' and 'Honky Tonk' by Bill Doggett, and Freddie King's 'Hide Away.' The thing in Dallas was, everyone kind of had their own version, their own take, on those songs."

Freddie moved back to Texas from Chicago in 1963, and in the latter half of the decade, Jimmie met his hero. "I played a place called the Three Thieves on Lover's Lane, and someone told me that he'd moved back to town and lived a couple of streets over, behind the club," Jimmie says. "One night, I was playing at a place nearby called Mother Blues, and he came in and sat at the bar, pretty much right in front of us, and watched us play. Sometimes he would sit in with us, play a couple songs and floor everybody, and then go back to the bar!," Jimmie laughs. "He used to call me 'Ron," and one night he said, 'Come with me!,' and I got in his Cadillac with him and we drove around to his house. He went into his house, and I don't know what he did, because I just stayed in the car! And then we went back to the club."

JOHNNY "GUITAR" WATSON

"Johnny 'Guitar' Watson was fabulous fantastic!," Jimmie says. "He was as good as anybody. He also played piano and sax and was an incredible singer and writer. He



played sax in high school. Never met him, and, sadly, never saw him play live. Later on, in the Seventies, he came back with all those big hits, like 'Real Mother for Ya,' which was real cool. He died onstage — top that. 'Lonely, Lonely Nights' was great too, but that was originally Earl King's tune.

"His first single, 'Motor Head Baby,' from 1953, is killer — he played piano on that, too. And 'Space Guitar' is probably the wildest guitar song ever recorded! To think that was 1954 - that was like Jimi Hendrix, over a decade earlier. 'Three Hours Past Midnight,' 'Cuttin' In,' all really great records. It's still exciting to hear that stuff."

MANCE LIPSCOMB

Mance Lipscomb (1895-1976) was born Beau De Glen Lipscomb near Navasota, Texas, between Austin and Houston. As a young man, he took on the name Mance as an abbreviation for "emancipation." Following his discovery in 1960 by Mack McCormick and Chris Strachwitz of Arhoolie Records, Lipscomb became an important artist in the folk revival of the early Sixties and was a regular performer at folk festivals and folk-blues clubs around the U.S., most notably the Ash Grove in L.A.

"In the early Sixties, Mance Lipscomb records were released on the Arhoolie label, which is how I discovered him. Mance did some great covers, like 'Baby Please Don't Go' and Jimmy Reed's 'Big Boss Man.' When I first came down to Austin in 1969, Mance would play the Armadillo and places like that, and I got to see him a few times. Great acoustic fingerpicker and singer." w



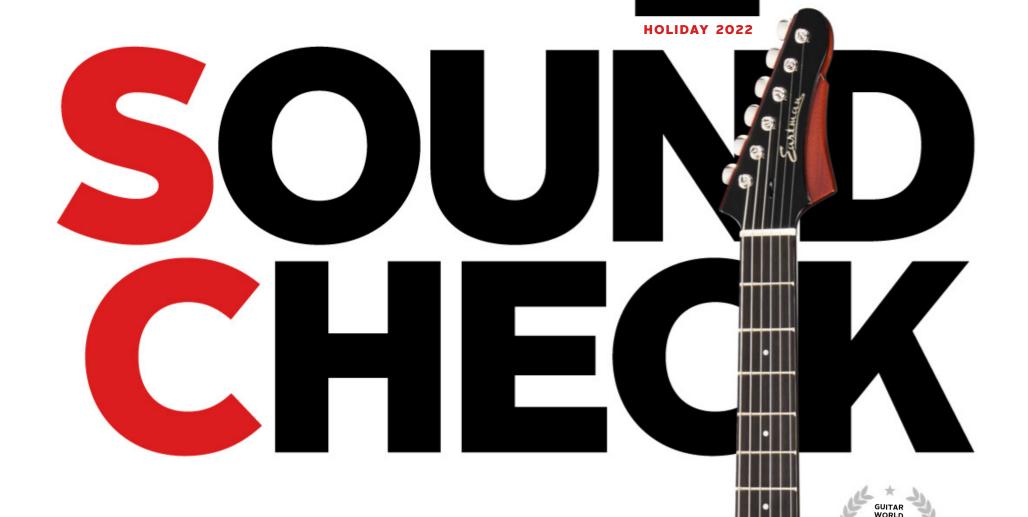
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the gear in review

Power and Passion

EASTMAN JULIET SOLIDBODIES

By Chris Gill

Royale 1932R 1x12 combo

SUPRO

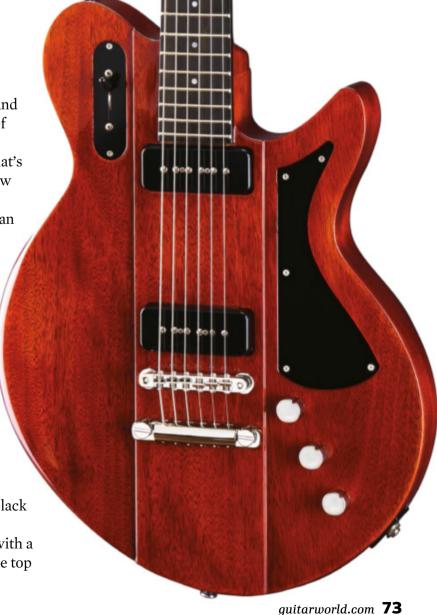
EASTMAN MADE A bold statement about the company's shift toward developing new, original designs by introducing their stunning thinline semihollow electric Romeo models. It was only natural that Eastman would name its subsequent new model Juliet, and that's exactly what the company has done with the trio of solidbody guitars they introduced recently. The Juliet solidbodies share an offset single-cutaway body shape that's similar to the Romeo's distinctive curves, albeit with a few notable differences befitting a solidbody model, such as smaller body dimension. Like its predecessor, the Eastman Juliet models offer an enchanting blend of traditional craftsmanship and the finest quality hardware and electronics at prices that make it difficult not to fall madly in love — and without the tragic outcome of Shakespeare's star-crossed lovers.

MARTIN GUITAR D-28 Rich Robinson

> **FEATURES** We tested the regular Juliet and Juliet P-90 models, each priced at \$1,799. Eastman also offers the Juliet/v Bigsby, which sells for \$2,240. Most of the features of the Juliet and Juliet P-90 are identical, with the exception of the Juliet's pair of Bare Knuckle Old Guard humbuckers, Pomona Blonde finish and amber tortoise acrylic pickguard compared to the Juliet P-90's pair of Bare Knuckle Old Guard P-90 single-coil pickups, Vintage Red finish and black Bakelite pickguard.

WARM AUDIO Warmdrive

> The Juliet models feature a one-piece okoume body with a raised center section (similar to a reverse Firebird) on the top



PLATINUM AWARD

EXCELLENCE



only. Perhaps the body's most distinctive feature is the inlaid pickguard and matching inlaid switch surround. The glued set-in one-piece okoume neck provides a 25.5-inch scale length, 22 medium jumbo Jescar FW47104-P frets, bone nut and ebony fingerboard with 12-inch radius and pearl dot inlays. The Juliet is the first Eastman model to offer a six-on-a-side headstock, which is sleek and stylish thanks to its carved stepdown painted in matching finish color.

In addition to the aforementioned Bare Knuckle pickups, electronics include a Schaller 3-way blade Megaswitch, CTS 500K audio taper pots, a Sprague Orange Drop .047 tone capacitor and Switchcraft output jack. Hardware consists of nickel-plated Gotoh tuners, tuneomatic-style bridge and stop tailpiece and Göldo knurled dome-top knobs (neck volume, bridge volume and bridge tone) with a deep notch that makes it easy to see and feel the setting. Even the strings are upscale — the Juliet ships with a set of D'Addario NYXL .010-.046 strings installed.

PERFORMANCE Eastman's website lists specs for uncommon details like pickup height (11mm), action height and even first fret height, which shows just how meticulously each guitar is set up before it leaves the final assembly. Out of the box neither of the two Juliet guitars we tested needed any additional tweaks, although some customers may need to make a simple adjustment of the

double-action truss rod depending on weather conditions. Both models provide peak playing action and optimal pickup output and string-tostring balance.

Kudos to Eastman for equipping the Juliet and Juliet P-90 with Bare Knuckle Old Guard Alnico 2 pickups, which provide first class vintage-style tone. The Juliet's humbuckers have a sparkling treble bite, beefy mids and gut-punching bass all with dazzling clarity. The Juliet P-90's single-coil soapbars deliver some of the finest P-90 tones I've ever heard, with intoxicating bark and growl plus a slightly brighter personality than the humbuckers. One detail I would change for my personal preference is wiring the tone control for the neck pickup instead of the bridge pickup, but many players will probably be fine using the tone control with just the bridge pickup.

Since Eastman guitars are built primarily by hand, I did notice a slight difference in the shapes of the neck profiles of the two guitars tested. The Juliet P-90 had a slightly chunkier and thicker neck, which I preferred for this model as it reminded me of my favorite Fifties Juniors, albeit without the overly fat "baseball bat" dimensions. I recommend buying from a dealer where you can try before you buy if you are particular about neck profiles, although the variances were slight enough not to really affect overall playability. The overall craftsmanship and attention to detail is stellar, and both models were a complete joy to play.

STREET PRICE:

\$1,799 (each)

MANUFACTURER:

Eastman Guitars. eastmanguitars.com

- Both models feature Bare Knuckle Old Guard pickups, with the Juliet offering a pair of humbuckers while the Juliet P-90 has two soapbar single-coils.
- The upscale electronics and hardware include components made by Gotoh, Switchcraft, Schaller and CTS.
- The one-piece body and onepiece set neck are hand crafted from okoume and feature details like a raised center section and carved step down.
- The pickguard and switch surround are inlaid into the top to provide a smooth surface on the top.

THE BOTTOM LINE:

The Eastman Juliet solidbody models provide guitarists with classic dual-humbucker or dual P-90 electric tones and traditional old-world craftsmanship, offering incredible value for players seeking an upscale performance experience.

Clean Cut

SUPRO ROYALE 1932R 1X12 COMBO

By Chris Gill

FOR MOST OF the previous four or five decades, amp designers have mostly focused on delivering increasingly higher amounts of gain, which is pretty much the exact opposite of the goals of electrical engineers during the Fifties and Sixties. However, more recently an in-



creasing number of amp companies are starting to focus on offering amps that offer as much clean headroom as possible. This is great news for guitarists who specialize in most of the nonrock or metal genres, such as blues, country, funk, jazz, rockabilly and more as well as players who prefer to sculpt their sonic soundscapes predominantly with pedals.

Supro's new Royale amps are designed to provide a "loud, clean slate," which hints at a pedal platform focus, but the amp is packed with numerous features that make it simply a greatsounding and versatile amp on its own. We took a look at the Supro Royale 1x12 50-watt combo.

FEATURES The Royale offers a true all-tube design. A pair of 5881 tubes in the power amp section provide switchable 50-(Class A/B) or 35-watts (Class A) of output, while three 12AX7s, a 12AT7 and a 12DW7 drive the preamp section, phase inverter, effects loop and reverb. Although the Royale has a single-channel design, guitarists can switch from clean to overdrive tones via the Boost function, which can be engaged via either a switch on the front panel or an optional footswitch. Users can also patch an overdrive or distortion pedal into the effects loop and use an optional footswitch to engage the loop.

The controls are all top-mounted and consist of preamp volume, preamp boost, individual switches for boost, reverb and loop, treble, mid and bass EQ, reverb level, reverb dwell, master volume and a three-way switch for Class AB, Class A or standby. The aforementioned 1/4-inch jacks for Boost and Loop footswitches are on the bottom of the chassis inside the openback cabinet along with an additional 1/4-inch footswitch jack for reverb, 1/4-inch mono effects loop send and return jacks and 1x16-ohm, 2x8-ohm and 2x4-ohm speaker outputs.

The 12-inch speaker is a custom Supro BD12 model with an oversized ceramic magnet and British-style cone. The amp chassis and speaker are housed in a sturdy poplar cabinet covered with early-Sixties-style Black Scandia Tolex that nicely contrasts and complements the cream-colored hemp grill cloth. A black vintage Supro logo and single line of cream piping surrounding the cabinet add to the vintage vibe.

PERFORMANCE For players seeking a tube amp with ample clean headroom and loud volume ouput on stage, the Royale rules. With single-coil guitars like Strats, Teles and even P90equipped variants, overdrive does not emerge until the Volume and Master controls are pushed to 8 and above. Humbuckers







reach the onset of overdrive a little earlier, but you still need to push the amp to a high output level before the grit and grind emerge. The boost function pushes things further into overdrive but always remains crisp and dynamic.

The Royale delivers an attractive tonal personality with fat, rich body and complex harmonics. The tone controls provide a good range of textures throughout the control knobs' entire range without ever getting too radical. The reverb is lush and deep, transforming the tone to instant surf city when engaged. The Class A/B setting delivers a responsive percussive pick attack and slightly scooped mid EQ, while the Class A setting has a touch of sag and a little fuller body overall.

While some overdrive and distortion pedals can be finicky about which amps they sound good with, the Supro Royale paired nicely with every dirt box I plugged into it. The same goes for various phase shifters, delays, choruses, you name it.



STREET PRICE: \$1,499 **MANUFACTURER:** Supro, suprousa.com

Three switches on the front panel allow users to engage the boost, reverb and effects loop functions.

The tube-driven reverb section includes separate level and dwell controls just like the classic standalone tube reverb units of the Sixties.

THE BOTTOM LINE

For players looking for a true tube amp with maximum clean headroom and impressive volume output, the Supro Royale delivers a great range of tones on its own or as the foundation of a pedal-driven platform.





An Appalachian Tale

MARTIN GUITAR D-28 RICH ROBINSON

By Paul Riario

YOU COULD SAY signature guitars are akin to vanity plates for an artist. Some are fun and evocative, while others serve individual expression. But after coming across the Martin Guitar D-28 Rich Robinson, I knew this signature guitar was something entirely different. When I asked the founding member of the Black Crowes what the impetus was behind it, he said, "I wish I had a great Martin like this, but I'm not taking my dad's on tour..." What he's talking about is his vintage 1954 Martin D-28, which was passed down to him from his father, Stanley "Stan" Robinson, who was a traveling musician with his folk band, the Appalachians, in the Fifties and Sixties; they even scored a single on the Billboard charts.

According to the younger Robinson, the original D-28 his father used was the guitar he learned to play on, write songs, and recorded with on every Black Crowes' record. For Robinson, what started out as a search for a "gold standard" Martin to take on the road evolved into an "aged" signature acoustic that's a tender tribute to his father, who had a profound influence on him and his music. Now, the D-28 Rich Robinson reflects all of that and more as an exact replica, right down to all the visible dings and wear and tear. And what's more, you can hear the soul of a classic Martin D-28 recreated in stunning detail.

FEATURES What's interesting is the D-28

Rich Robinson is Martin's first collaboration in replicating an artist's personal instrument both visually and sonically rather than building a custom-made one. Regardless, it's still a top-of-the-line instrument, with Martin's inimitable attention to detail. Feeling the guitar's ultra-thin vintage gloss finish along with its aged satin-finished East Indian rosewood back and sides and aged Sitka spruce top, you have to scratch your head at how remarkable Martin's aging process appears so uncannily authentic — you'd be hard-pressed to distinguish this guitar from a vintage D-28.

The mahogany neck has a hand-carved "Barrel and Heel" neck shape, which means it's a fuller and rounder profile that becomes thicker as you approach the heel. Everything about the guitar mirrors Martin's "Fiftiesstyle" build quality that includes a square taper headstock shape with East Indian rosewood headplate, diamond volute, old style "Golden Era" script logo, rearwardshifted non-scalloped bracing, dovetail neck joint and authentic hide glue construction, an ebony fingerboard and bridge, and aged nickel enclosed tuners. In what seems to be the only modification, Robinson requested that the bridge's wings be slightly softened for comfort. Of note, Robinson's father played that original D-28 onstage at the Grand Ole Opry, which is why he affectionately named the model "The Appalachian." If you peer inside the soundhole, you'll see the label sticker pays him homage with that

moniker, and it's also signed by Robinson and numbered in sequence.

PERFORMANCE Not having the original to compare it to, it does seem the Martin team has nailed the overall vibe of Robinson's D-28. And it would be hard to dispute that. For one, Robinson has glowingly signed off on it, and two, Martin is unsurpassed in textbook recreations of vintage Martin acoustics plucked from their own historical museum, and if anything, they're doing just that for this archetypal Fifties-era "aged" signature. As a result, the D-28 Robinson already feels played-in and casts a broken-in and captivatingly mature sound. The beefier neck shape of this signature may take some getting used to, but I've completely adjusted to it, and the taller frets make playing it a breeze. I also wholeheartedly believe its palm-filling profile contributes to its booming dreadnought tone. That powerful and complex voice can equally be attributed to its patterned rearshifted and non-scalloped bracing. It's been said this bracing offers balanced tone and crisp volume — which it has in spades, but I find the guitar also rings out a mellower shimmer with a defined bass response that sounds big and present without being muddy. It's so detailed that I had to check it with my favorite marquee acoustics to remind me how puny they sound in comparison.

There's much to be said over deliberately "aged" guitars, but the D-28 Rich Robinson deserves a place at the dreadnought table.







STREET PRICE: \$6,999 **MANUFACTURER:**

Martin Guitar, martinguitar.com

- The D-28 Rich Robinson features rearward-shifted non-scalloped bracing for a more balanced tone and added volume.
- The wings of the guitar's ebony bridge are slightly softened for comfort per Robinson's request.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The Martin Guitar D-28 Rich Robinson is an incredibly accurate recreation of Robinson's father's acoustic that has all the mojo of a vintage Fifties dreadnought.

Buzz Bin Warm Audio Warmdrive

I CAN GIVE you a reason why certain pedals become legendary and often get name-checked by rhapsodic fans in online forums and magazine articles. Throughout my career, I'd hear about an "amazing" unheard-of pedal that would set me off on a wild goose chase, and after finally getting around to playing it, well, what's that expression? If you know, you know.

I've played most of these

romanticized stompboxes, and for the most part, they live up to their accolades. It's also why some of them have been repeatedly cloned, to mostly impressive results. Warm Audio is well known for making faithful recreations of tried-and-true microphones as well as recording gear, and whether you know it or not, rare guitar pedals. The company recently added two additional pedals to their roster: the Centavo (a dead-on "Klone") and the Warmdrive (a true Zen-inspired repro). I'll save you the trouble and let you know that the Centavo is a bonafide knockout; but for this review, I'd rather direct my focus on the Warmdrive — the more esoteric of the two — which is so outstanding, you'll understand why an overdrive of this caliber is consistently at the top of every guitarist's wish list.

Warm Audio prides itself on matching the authentic circuit, which involves pairing high-end chips like 2N7000 MOSFETs, 1N34a Germanium/Schottky BAT41 diodes, a NE5532 Op-Amp and carbon resistors to approach the enviable "Dumble-style" character of the original pedal made popular by guitarists such as Larry Carlton and Robben Ford. The four controls for Volume, Gain, Tone and Voice respond as expected, but the interplay between the Voice and Tone allows the Warmdrive to precisely administer the amount of resonant body and treble response before (Voice) and after (Tone) you add gain-clipping. The Warmdrive features buffered bypass operation and is powered by a 9V battery or 9V DC adapter.

Not to sound too redundant, but this pedal is all about warmth and another heaping spoonful of warmth. It's quite possibly the most touch-sensitive pedal I've ever had in my possession, with a creamy overdrive that's burnished to perfection but also makes its stinging presence known. It's an astounding low-to-mid gain that proceeds to make your amp sound as if there's an extra preamp tube that heats up your signal. In other words, every knob setting unveils a new "sweet spot" of warmly pronounced drive, whether you need mild distortion or a sustained gain bump that cushions each note and chord in velvety softness. It also nails that cutting fusion-like tone heard in blues, bebop and country, which many seasoned guitarists lust after - except this time around, you won't have to dig deep to find Warm Audio's Warmdrive. And now that you know, you know. — Paul Riario

STREET PRICE: \$149

MANUFACTURER: Warm Audio, warmaudio.com







DEEP WATERS

Applying a Jimi Hendrix approach to improvising on "Rollin' Stone"

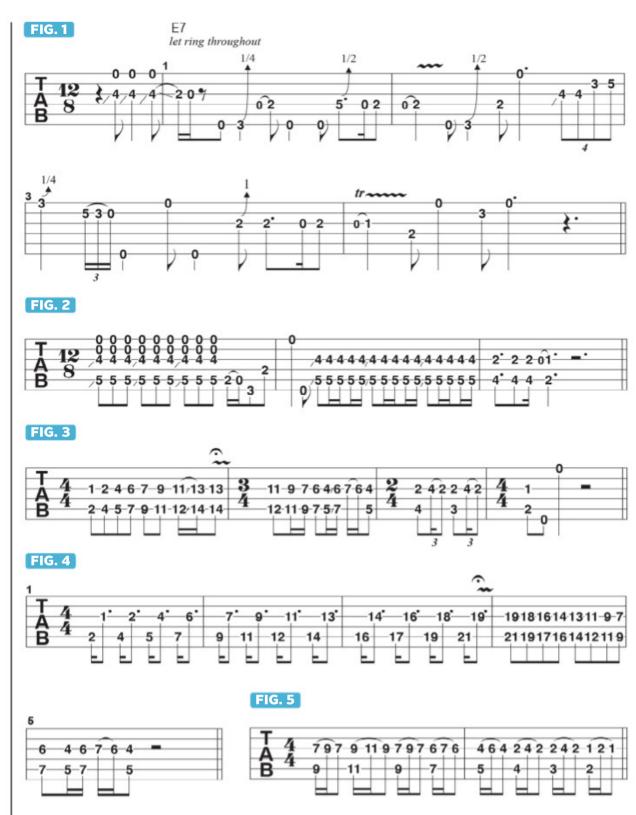
OVER THE COURSE of the last few columns, we've been exploring different ways to improvise around the main themes and melodies played by Muddy Waters on his classic track, "Rollin' Stone." Jimi Hendrix recorded a few incredible versions of this song, under the title "Catfish Blues." Three great versions can be heard on The BBC Sessions, Blues and the Jimi Hendrix Experience box set. This month, we'll look at some ways to add Jimi-like ideas to interpreting and improvising on this song.

Jimi would often augment his solo lines with double-stops (two-note figures) or droning open strings. Played in the key of E, **FIGURE 1** presents an improvisation on the song's melody. We begin with repeated ascending slides up the G string, played in unison with an open high-E drone. Throughout this four-bar figure, the melodic elements of the verse are supported by a repeating theme that falls in the spaces within beats 2 and 3 of each bar. The phrase ends in bar 4 with the open high E string ringing against a D note on the B string's 3rd fret. This D note serves as the \$7 (flat 7) of E and reinforces the figure's E dominant 7 tonality (E, G#, B, D), which lives within the structure of the E Mixolydian mode (E, F#, G#, A, B, C#, D).

A common way to lay a foundation under the next section of the melody — the part where Muddy sings, "I'd have all you pretty young women" — is to play a minor 3rd interval on the G and B strings, sliding up to B and D, at the 4th and 3rd frets, respectively. A Jimi-like twist, one that he employed in "Voodoo Child (Slight Return)," "Midnight Lightning" and other songs, is to drop the D note down an octave and play it on the A string's 5th fret, as shown in **FIGURE 2**. Inverting the minor 3rd interval like this transforms it to a major 6th, the two notes now being six scale degrees apart.

In bar 1, the 6th interval (D-B) is filled out by the inclusion of the open B and high E strings, played in a rhythm of eighth-note triplets. In bar 2 the strumming switches to sextuplets (written as 16th notes in $\frac{12}{8}$ meter), which serves to drive the rhythm harder.

The use of 6ths as a convention for rhythm guitar is one well-rooted in blues, as



well as R&B and soul. You'll hear the sound of 6ths on many classic songs by Robert Johnson and Lightnin' Hopkins, and also Otis Redding, Sam & Dave and Wilson Pickett (the latter three artists often featuring session guitarist Steve Cropper).

All guitarists should learn the shapes of 6th intervals across the entire fretboard, relative to every scale. In this type of dominant 7th-based tonality, Mixolydian works best. FIGURE 3 illustrates E Mixolydian harmonized in major and minor 6ths, as they occur diatonically, or within the scale. Another useful approach is to sound the notes of each 6th individually instead of simultaneously, as demonstrated in **FIGURE 4**. And a cool twist is to add melodic embellishments on top, as shown in **FIGURE 5**.

GW associate editor Andy Aledort is recognized worldwide for his vast contributions to guitar instruction, via his many best-selling instructional DVDs, transcription books and online lessons. His new album, Light of Love, is available from andyaledort.com and all streaming services.

TALES FROM NERDVILLE

by Joe Bonamassa





GREEN LIGHT

More reflections on the great British blues legend Peter Green

IN THE PREVIOUS column, I discussed my approach to recording a cover of the Peter Green/Fleetwood Mac track "Lazy Poker Blues," for my upcoming album, *Blues Deluxe*, *Vol. 2*. This month, I'd like to offer some insight into another musical tribute of mine to the late, great British guitarist.

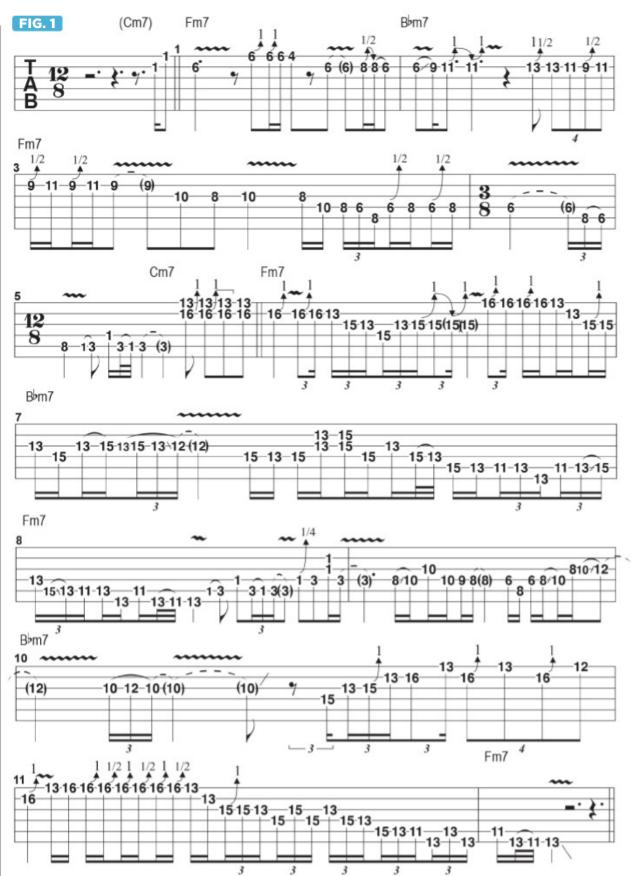
For those who may be unfamiliar with Peter, he first came to prominence as Eric Clapton's replacement in John Mayall's Bluesbreakers, when Eric left in the spring of 1966 to form Cream. At the time, Eric was the UK's preeminent guitarist, popularly nicknamed "God." In other words, these were very large shoes to fill, and it would have been a tough spot for any guitarist to be in. Peter, as the world would soon discover, was not only up to the task but shined brilliantly during his brief stint with Mayall, splitting in 1967 to form the original Fleetwood Mac. Peter's only full album with Mayall. A Hard Road, is one that I listened to countless times as a kid. My cover of the Otis Rush song "So Many Roads," which I first cut for You and Me (2006) was based on Mavall's cover of the tune with Green.

FIGURE 1 is an improvised solo of mine, inspired by "So Many Roads" and similarly played over a slow 12-bar blues in the key of F minor, with a ½ triplet feel. Throughout the solo, I'm trying to emulate a bit of Peter's sound and melodic approach. Using a Les Paul (definitely the correct guitar for this application), I'm on the bridge pickup, and while playing, my attention is on listening for the variables in left- and right-hand articulation and touch that will produce the desired sound and feel.

A brief note on the form here. I'm playing "freely" through the chords of a i - iv - v (one - four - five) blues progression in F minor (Fm7 - B\rangle m7 - Cm7), and bar 4 ended up being only one beat long, as indicated by the time signature \{ \frac{3}{8}.}

This entire solo melody is based on the F minor pentatonic scale (F, A, B, C, E) and the F blues scale (F, A, B, C, C, E), with a very brief inclusion of the 2nd, G, in bars 9 and 10.

For me, an essential element of Peter's style, which I strove to emulate here, is his



phrasing and uncanny ability to express so much emotion in his melodies. Also, the way the lines are articulated, via picking and fretting techniques, is just as essential as the note choices. Work through every phrase with an ear for how the use of *space* (silence) is balanced against sudden note barrages that move across bar lines.

Peter's style had a nonchalant quality to it — the phrases seem so effortless — but he also sounds angry at times. This is something I love about the playing of other British guitarists as well, such as Jeff Beck, Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page and Mick Taylor, all graduates of the mid-Sixties British blues explosion.

Joe Bonamassa is one of the world's most popular blues-rock guitarists — not to mention a top producer and *de facto* ambassador of the blues.

MELODIC MUSE

by Andy Timmons



For video of this lesson, go to guitarworld.com/holiday2022

THE BENDS, PART 3

Finding the melody via alternative string-bending techniques

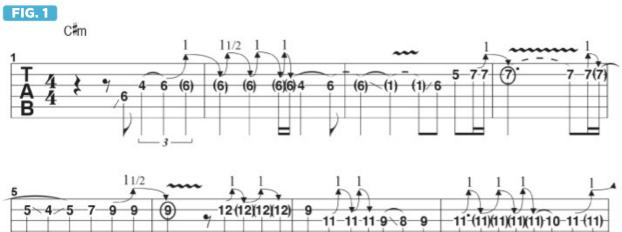
WE'VE BEEN DISCUSSING string bending techniques and the many different melodies, sounds and emotive qualities available to guitarists via different ways to bend and shake the strings. Our previous examples have been in the key of C# minor, and this month's musical example will be played over a 24-bar minor blues form in that key. My goal here is to present some beautiful and musical lines that are performed with a variety of bending techniques, which I hope will ultimately inspire you to do the same in your own improvisations.

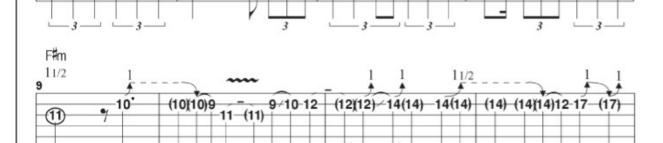
As I start any solo, I like to have some kind of direction in mind; I might start simply, and as the lines build I will often move up the fretboard. **FIGURE 1** illustrates the 24-bar solo, which kicks off with eight bars on the tonic, C#m. Across these bars, I play lines based on the C# minor pentatonic scale (C#, E, F#, G#, B), with the inclusion of the 2nd, or 9th, D#. At the end of bar 1, I bend the C# root note up a whole step to the 2nd, D#, then release the bend and bend up one and a half steps to the minor, or "flatted," 3rd, E. So, right away, I'm using bends to target specific pitches.

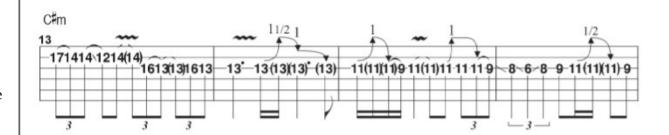
In a global sense, I'm aware of using bending techniques to touch on and maneuver around the notes of any given chord. For C#m, the triadic chord tones are C#, E and G#. For F#m, they're F#, A and C#. For A7, the expanded dominant 7th chord tones are A, C#, E and G, and the G#7 chord tones are G#, B#, D# and F#.

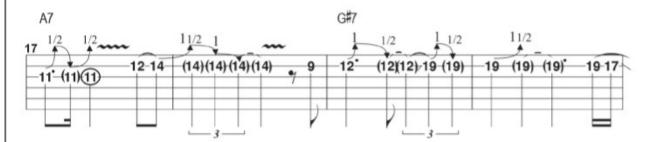
One of my favorite things about string bending is that it offers me a wonderful and effective way to emulate the ability of the human voice to seamlessly glide from one pitch to the next. There are other techniques and articulations that guitarists often use to mimic the legato (smooth and connected) quality of singing, such as finger slides, hammer-ons and pull-offs. Throughout this solo, you'll see that I incorporate all of these legato articulations, along with string bending, in order to make the lines sound as expressive and fluid as possible.

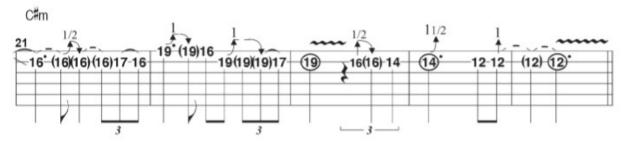
A brief note on the chord progression here. Similar in structure to a typical i - iv -V (one - four - five) minor blues in C# minor











(C#m - F#m - G#7), this progression additional includes the VI (flat six) chord, A7, before resolving to the V, G#7. One can also substitute G#759 for G#7 for added color and harmonic tension.

Another essential element in utilizing string bending, as I do in this example, is to

stay on one specific string while presenting a long melodic phrase. I do this in bars 1-3, 11-13 and 14-17. Choosing to stay on a given string like this ultimately affords you the opportunity to use bends, as well as slides, hammer-ons and pull-offs, to create unique and expressive melodies.

Andy Timmons is a world-renowned guitarist known for his work with the Andy Timmons Band, Danger Danger and Simon Phillips. His new album, Electric Truth, is out now. Visit andytimmons.com and guitarxperience.net to check out his recordings and many instructional releases.

LIVE FROM FLAT V

by Josh Smith



JAMES MEETS DANNY

How to play "Brown Gatton," part 1

"BROWN GATTON" IS a song I recorded back in 2017 for my album *Still*, which leaned on the jazzier side of things. As the title suggests, the tune is essentially my expression of "James Brown meets Danny Gatton." Singer and bandleader James Brown is, of course, the Godfather of Soul, and Danny Gatton, for those who may be unfamiliar, was one of the greatest allaround guitarists of all time.

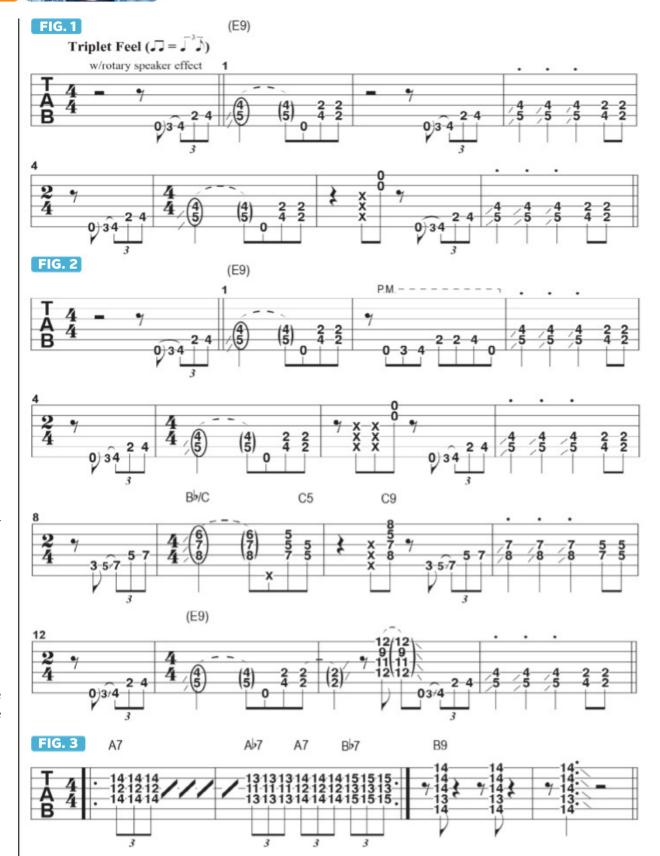
Among Gatton's many musical talents, he was a country-style player par excellence. But, like the legendary Les Paul, he was also a jazz master who had a million musical tricks up his sleeve, often leaving audiences, and especially fellow guitarists, with their jaws on the ground. A bootleg tape of a live performance of his, performing with Robert Gordon, made the rounds in the early Eighties and was affectionately referred to as "The Humbler," because one listen would immediately humble just about any guitarist. "The Humbler" later appeared as an official release and is still available today. Get it!

The James Brown part of the equation comes from the groove, which is a JB-type shuffle, along the lines of "Doin' it to Death." I mix this with Danny Gatton-style hybrid picking and musical ideas and some interesting twists and turns.

The tune's main theme is set to a medium shuffle groove in the key of E and includes a bar of $\frac{2}{4}$ every third bar, among the overall $\frac{4}{4}$ meter. As shown in **FIGURE** 1, the theme begins with a bassline-like riff that includes *double-stops* (two-note chords) played on the A and D strings. At bar 3, there's a shift to $\frac{2}{4}$ and then a return to $\frac{4}{4}$ in bar 4.

The second time through this initial form, the tonality modulates to the key of C. As shown in **FIGURE 2**, the first eight bars are the riff as played in E, and bar 9, which is a $\frac{2}{4}$ bar, serves as a transition, or pivot, to the key of C. From here, the riff is played in C, in bars 10-12, and then three bars later, in bar 13, a $\frac{2}{4}$ bar is used once again to transition back to the riff in E.

The inclusion of these $\frac{2}{4}$ bars adds a twist and a lot of forward motion to the tune. As



we hit those "half bars," the audience feels it because something out of the ordinary is happening. But it feels very natural because the groove remains solid as the phrase turns around on itself in a place that the ear is not used to hearing. When we get to the solo sections later, these half bars make for some really great melodic opportunities, because the licks will cross over those bar

lines at unusual and unexpected times.

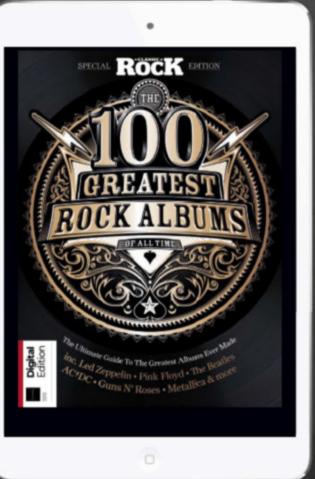
The bridge section, shown in **FIGURE 3**, moves to the IV (four) chord in the key of E, A7, and we're in full-on James Brown mode here, as I strum a steady stream of eighth-note triplets through the section. I prefer to use all downstrokes here, to accentuate and emphasize the power of the triplet-based shuffle feel.

Josh Smith is a highly respected blues-country-jazz master and all-around tone wizard (not to mention an effective instructor). His new album, 2022's Bird of Passage, is out now. For more info, check out joshsmithguitar.com.

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Performance Notes

HOW TO PLAY THIS MONTH'S SONGS



FOO FIGHTERS

ONE BY ONE



ONE OF THE Foo Fighters' biggest hits, this modern rock classic features powerful, punchy riffs built around unusual chord voicings that "cut"

nicely with the high-gain tones employed by guitarists Dave Grohl and Chris Shiflett.

The song kicks off with a repeating onebar figure consisting of a root-5th G5 power chord played in a punctuated eighth-note rhythm. When playing this part, you'll need to completely mute the strings on beats 2 and 4, using both pick-hand palm muting (P.M.), as indicated, and fret-hand muting, temporarily loosening your grip on the chord shape. And use all downstrokes here, for a uniformly punchy attack.

The pre-verse riff, beginning in bar 11. is built around what are called *minor 10th* intervals, which are minor 3rds with the top note moved up an octave. In this case, the intervals are implying Gm, Am, and Bbm chords, and the fretted notes are fingered on the G and low E strings. The X's in the tablature indicate that the A and D strings are completely muted with the fret hand. This is done by lightly laying your first finger across them, as if you were performing natural harmonics. Done correctly, this muting action will prevent any unwanted open notes from sounding as you strum. Regarding the pick hand, continue using downstrokes for all the eighth-note rhythms here, switching to down-up strumming only for the pairs of 16th notes at the end of bar 18.

The verse riff that begins at section C is a variation on the previous riff that uses the same intervals but with single notes and lots of string skips. Here, for the sake of picking efficiency and economy of movement, you'll want to pick each high Bb note on the G string's 3rd fret with an upstroke.

For the song's chorus, Grohl and Shiflett strum unusual voicings of Eb and G5, capitalizing on the resonant roar of the open G string, which serves as a unifying common tone among these two chords, as well as the C/E and Fsus2 that follow. As the feel is "wide open" here, use a looser down-up strum for the eighth-note rhythms.

— JIMMY BROWN





FOGHAT'S TURBO-CHARGED COVER of this old Willie Dixon tune features the band's guitarists Dave Peverett and Rod Price stretching out with

some extended blues-rock jamming, simultaneous soloing and sweet harmony leads.

Interestingly, the song does not follow your typical 12-bar blues progression and is based primarily around a one-chord vamp on A, with the two guitarists playing different but rhythmically synchronized incarnations on the main riff at section B, which complement each other beautifully. Notice how Price (Gtr. 2) plays several of the notes in the repeating riff an octave higher than Peverett (Gtr. 1), similar to what he did with the "call and response" licks during bars 17-20. When playing this riff, which continues for the verse (section C), be sure to completely silence the strings during the eighth-note rests between the chord stabs, using both hands.

At the bridge (section E), the feel abruptly changes to a more rhythmically dense, James Brown-style double-time funk groove on D9. Use a loose, down-up-downup 16th-note strum here, with the pick hand oscillating back and forth over the strings twice per beat. For the fret-hand-muted strums, indicated by the stacks of X's, simply relax your grip on the strings so that they momentarily break contact with the frets, but without letting go of the strings.

The "dixieland-style" dueling leads jam at section F features both Peverett and Price playing similar phrases based mainly on the A minor pentatonic scale -A, C, D, E, G (root, $\frac{1}{3}$, 4, 5, and $\frac{1}{7}$, respectively) – with some "color tones" added here and there, such as the 6th (F#) and the 5th (Eb), plus lots of bends and vibratos, which give their licks a soulful, vocal-like quality.

This song offers many great opportunities to hone your string bending and finger vibrato techniques. Strive for smooth, even note shakes and good, accurate pitch targeting for the various half-step, whole-step and one-and-one-half-step bends, especially during the climactic harmony-leads section that begins at bar 84. — JIMMY BROWN





THIS STEELY **DAN** classic is a fine example of the unique pop genius of the songwriting team of guitarist/ bassist Walter Becker and keyboardist/

vocalist Donald Fagen, who have brilliantly crafted many songs that feature sophisticated, "jazzy" chord progressions that are catchy and accessible to a wide audience. Another part of that genius entailed hiring the best session musicians available, including guitarists Larry Carlton and Dean Parks. It is Becker, however, who plays this song's tastefully conceived and executed solo, not Carlton, as many assume.

The first four bars of "Josie's" immediately recognizable intro feature a haunting, almost medieval sounding sequence of two-note chords, or intervals, which are performed with hybrid picking (pick and finger), in order to sound notes on different strings simultaneously, "keyboard-style." In bar 9, the rhythm guitar settles into a funky, punctuated vamp on Em7. This part should be articulated with accented pick strums (specific strokes are indicated), taking care not to graze the unused bass strings. Also, be sure to mute the fretted strings with your left-hand fingers during the rests between the chord hits. Allow the tip of your index finger to lightly touch the D string, to prevent it from ringing.

Section D features three guitars playing single-note lines in sweet, perfectly synchronized harmony. Notice the subtle use of finger slides, bends and vibratos here, which make the three parts sing as one. For a cool, interesting challenge, try playing two or all three parts on one guitar, moving certain notes to different strings, as necessary.

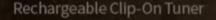
Becker begins his solo (section E) by quoting the song's verse melody, using string bends, a fairly clean tone and a sensitive touch to achieve a soulful expressiveness. Throughout the solo, the guitarist displays brilliant phrasing, balancing each successive melodic idea against the last. Becker may not blow you away with speed, but his blues-influenced lines caress the groove with delicacy and exquisite taste.

— ANDY ALEDORT

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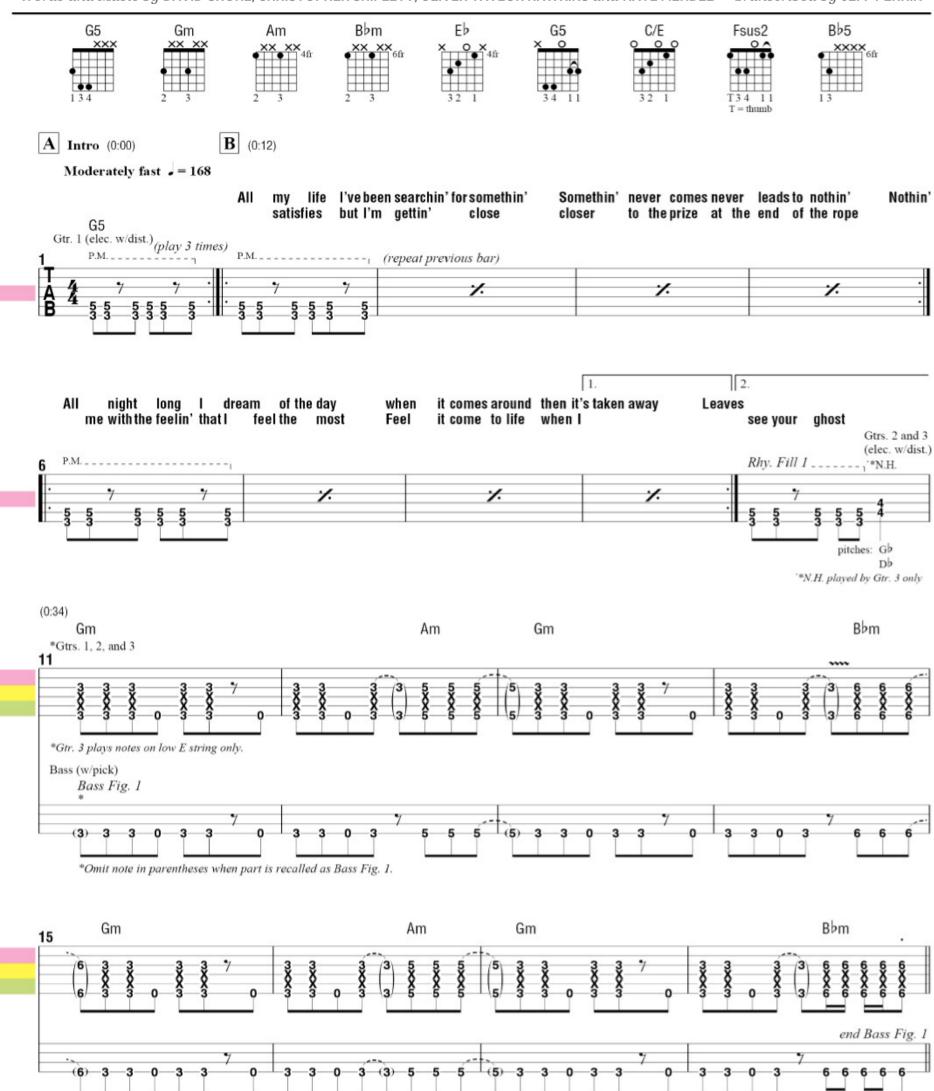


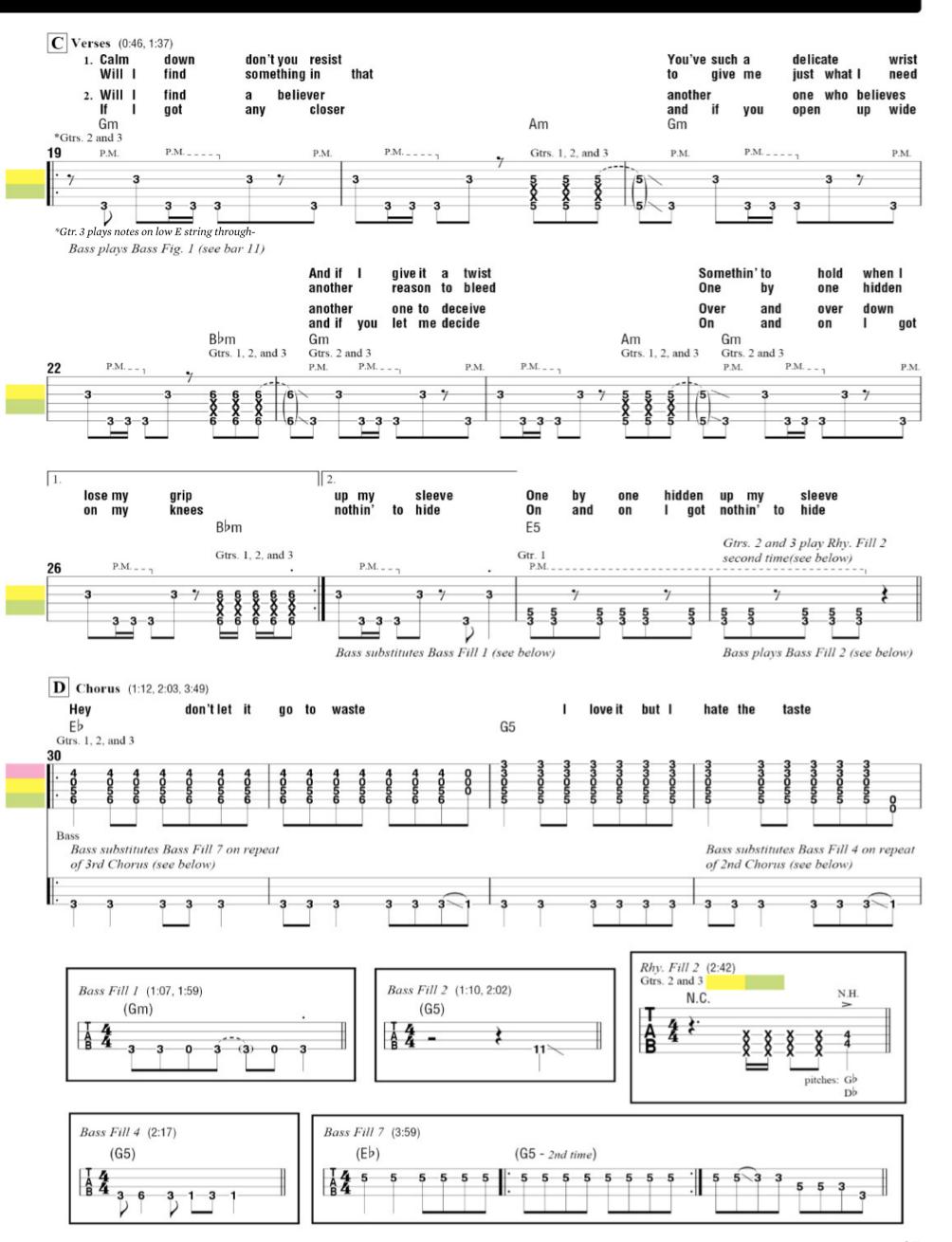
"ALL MY LIFE"

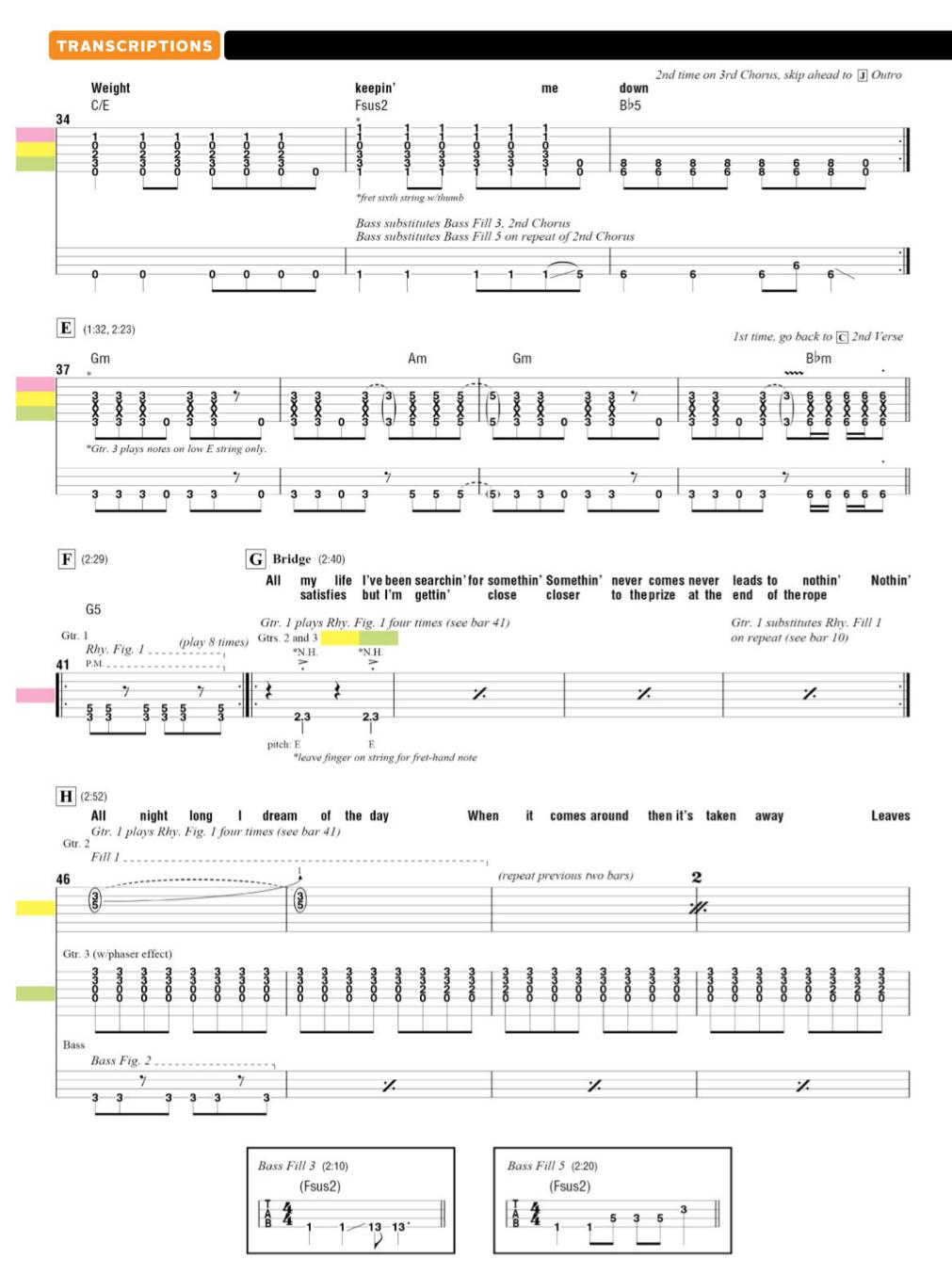
Foo Fighters

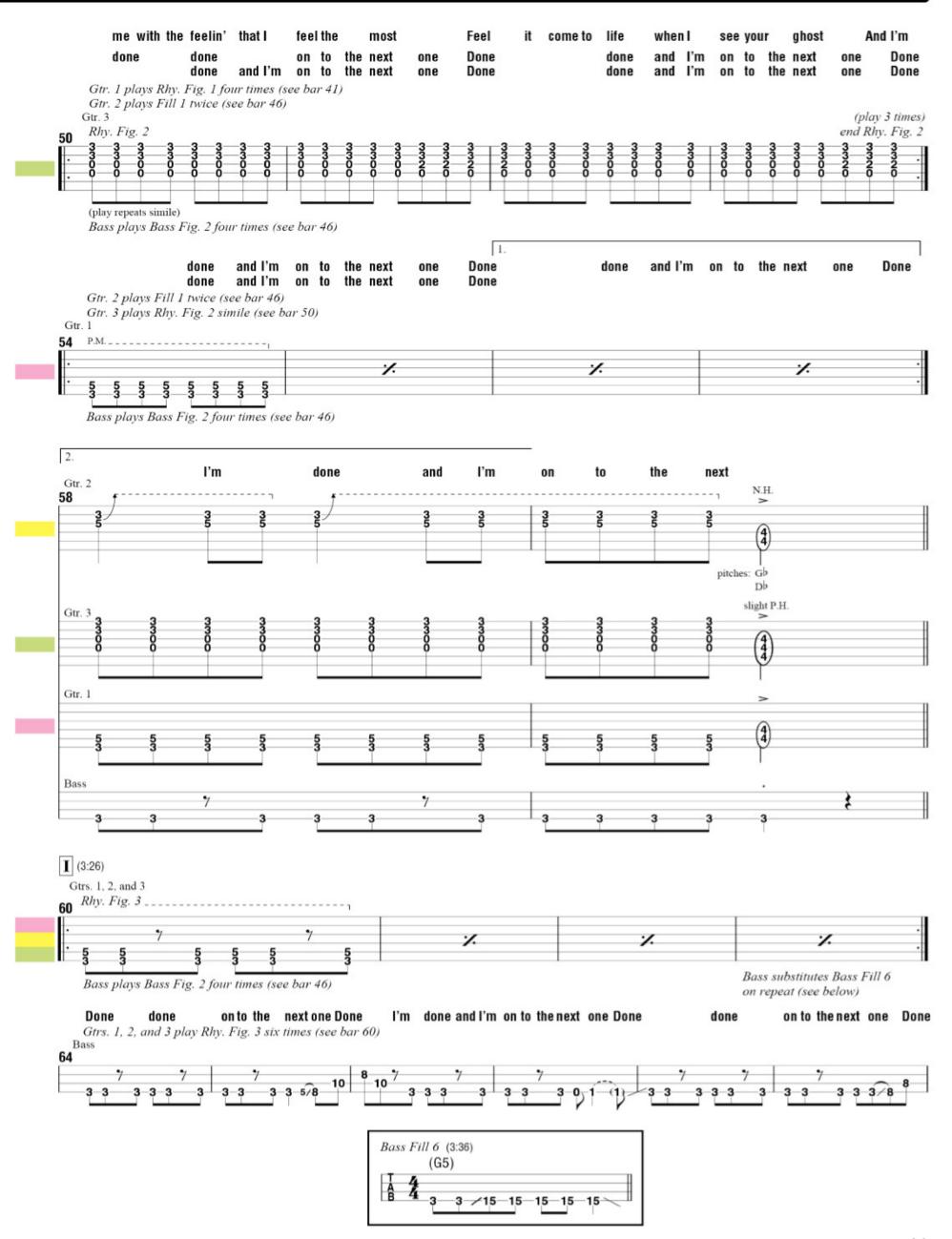
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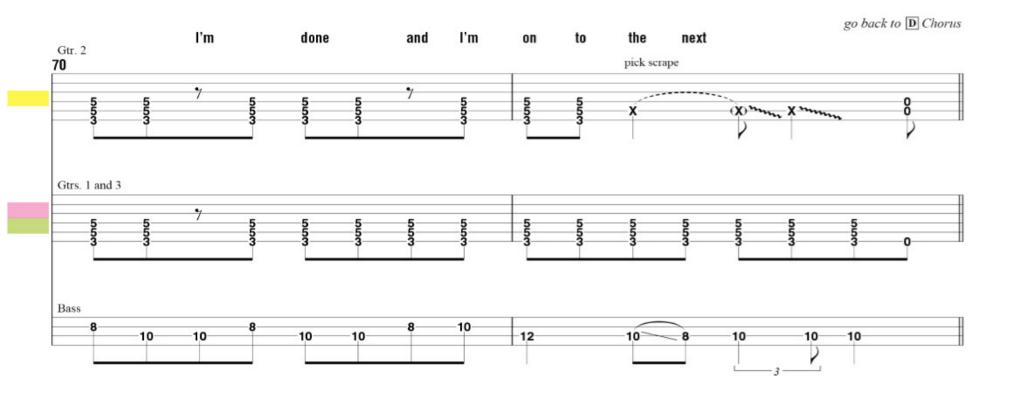
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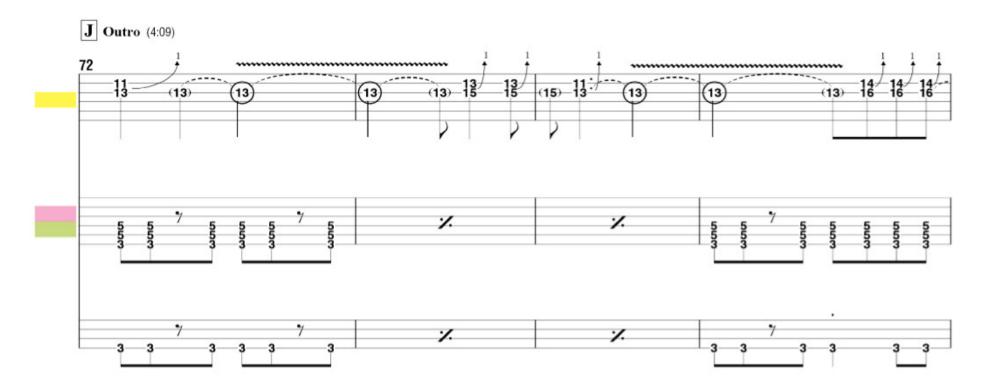


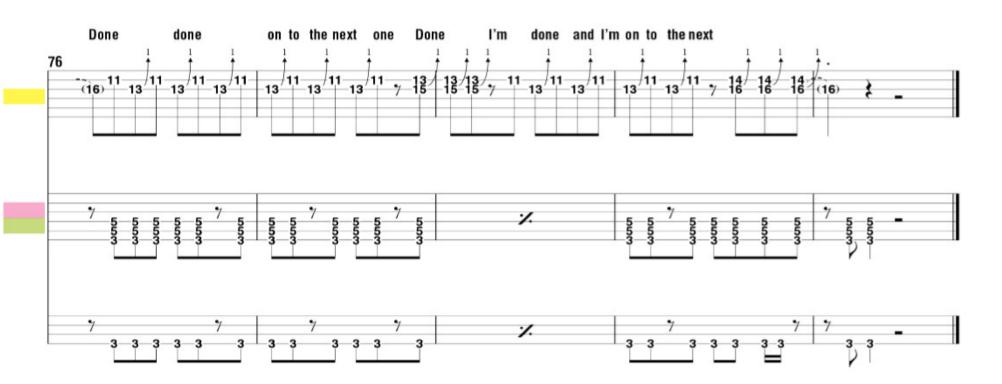














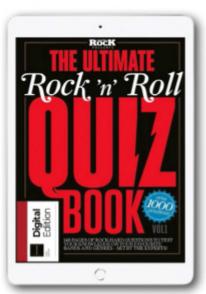
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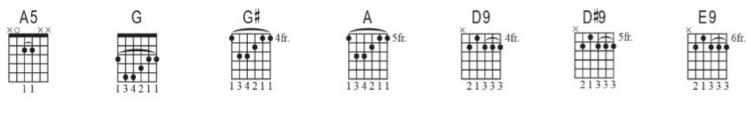
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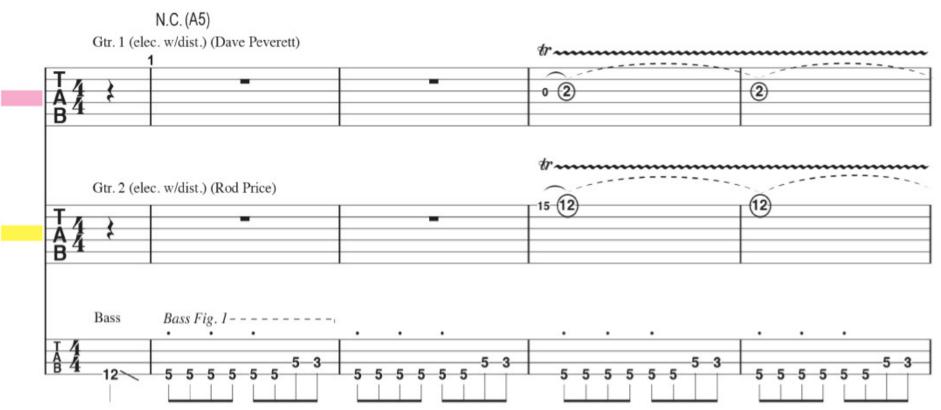
Foghat

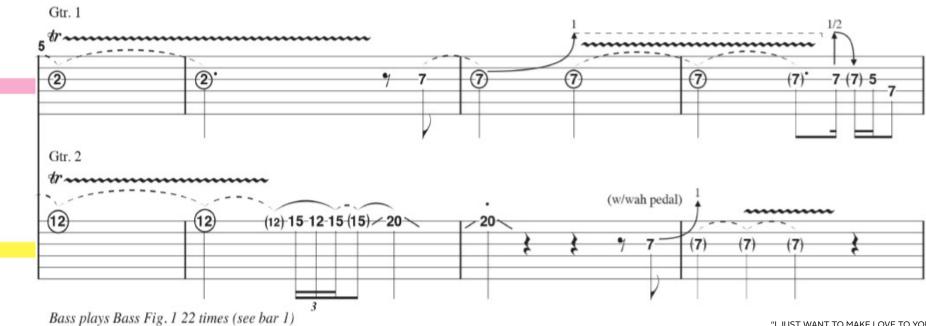
As heard on **FOGHAT**

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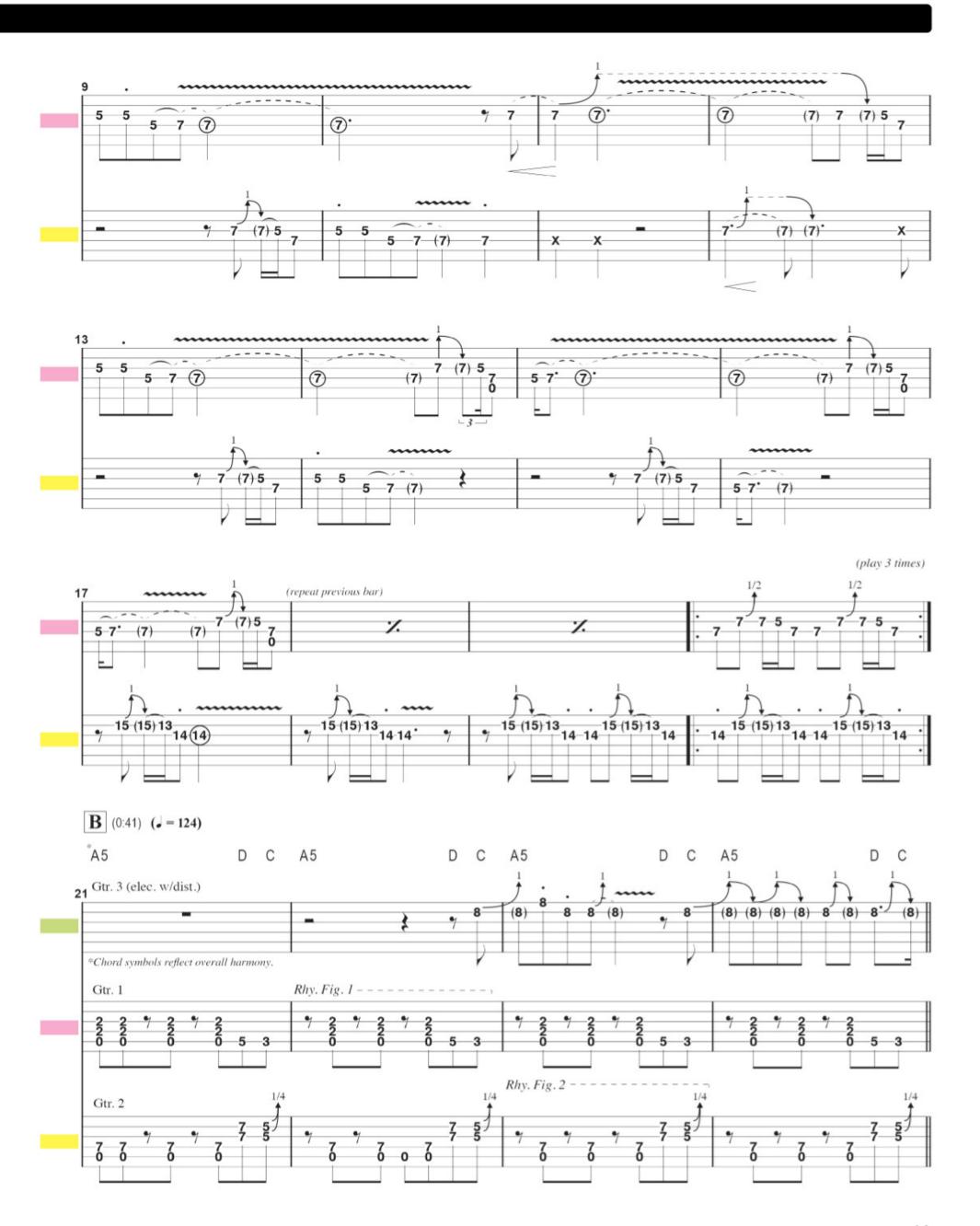


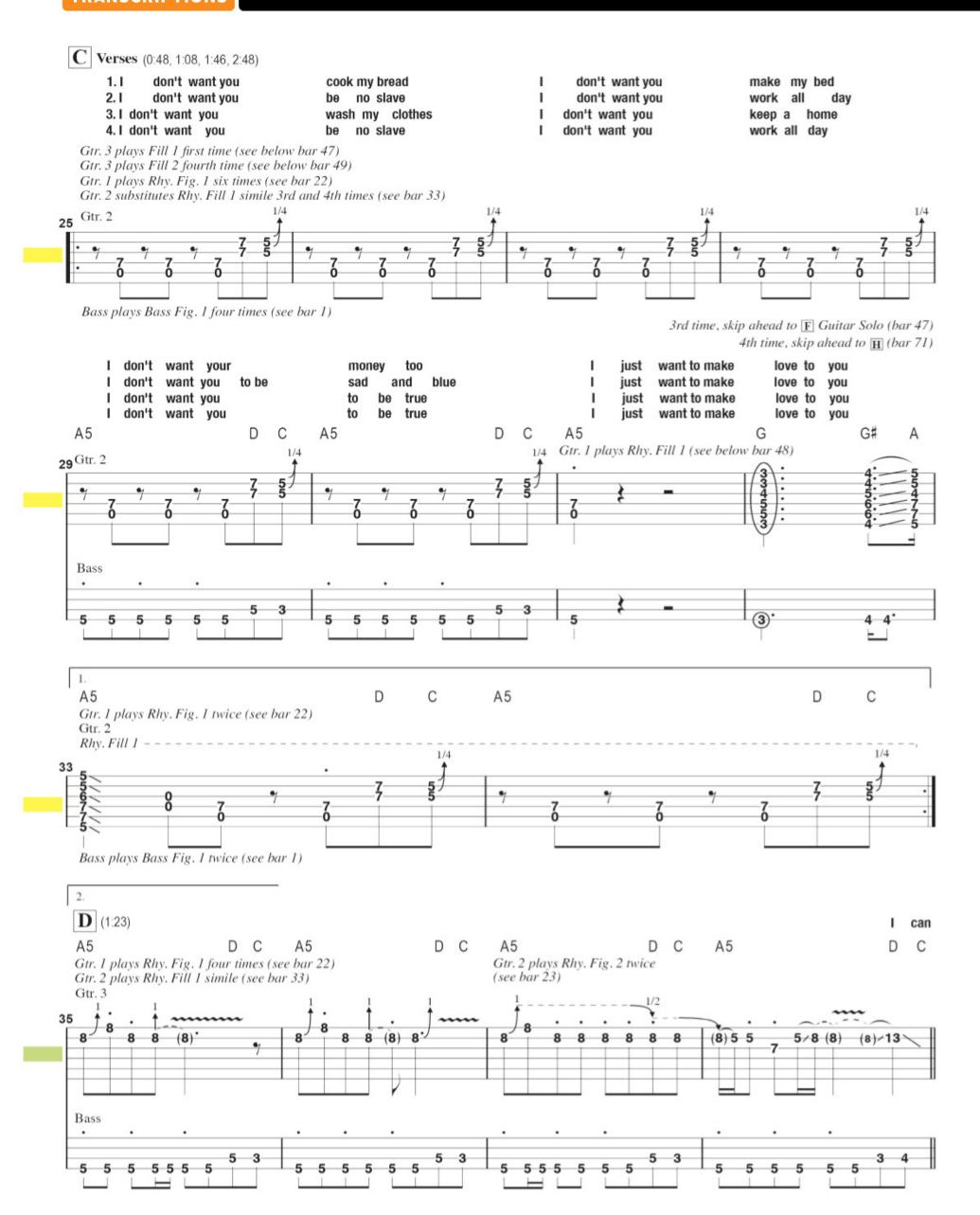
A Intro (0:00) Moderately Fast \bullet = 131

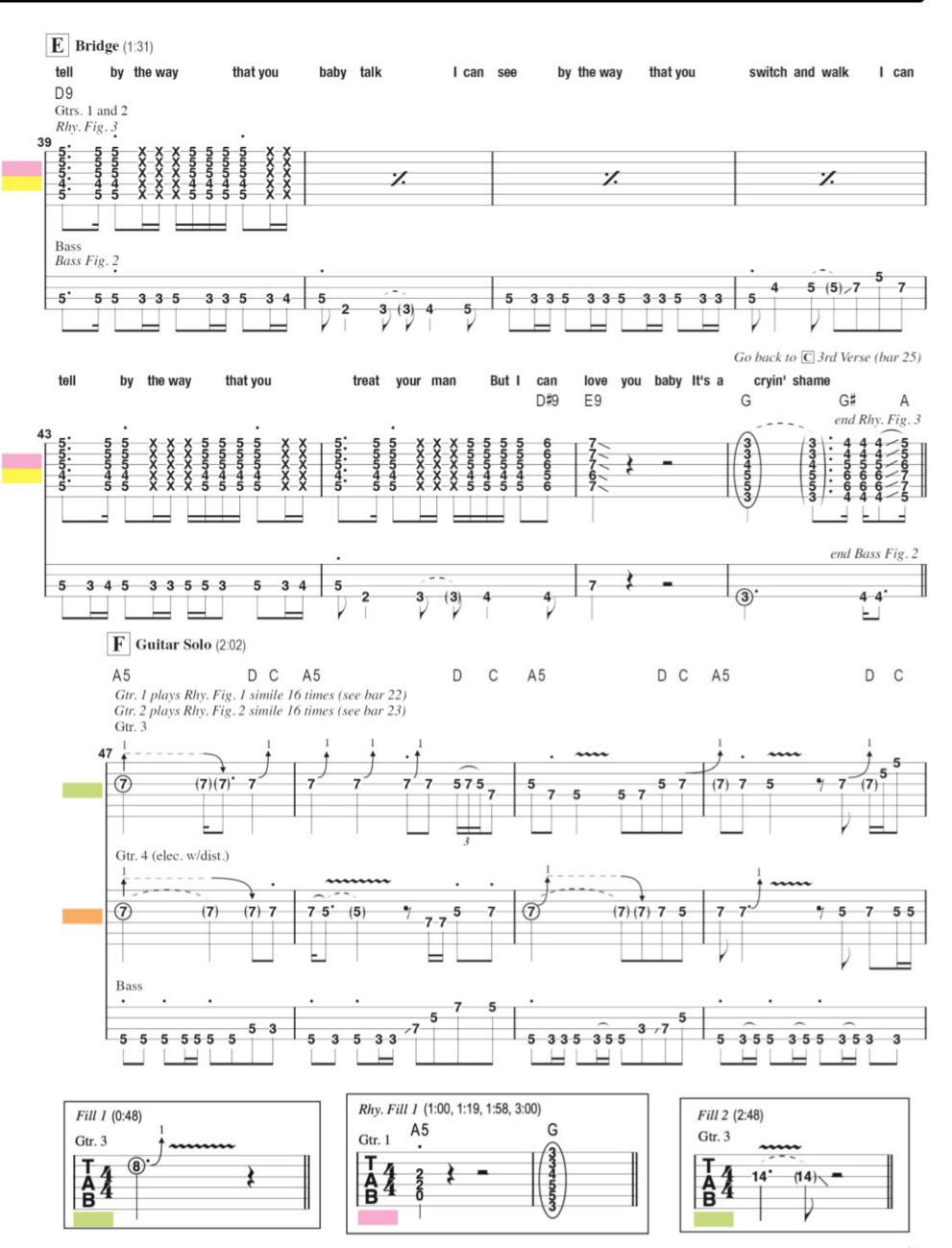


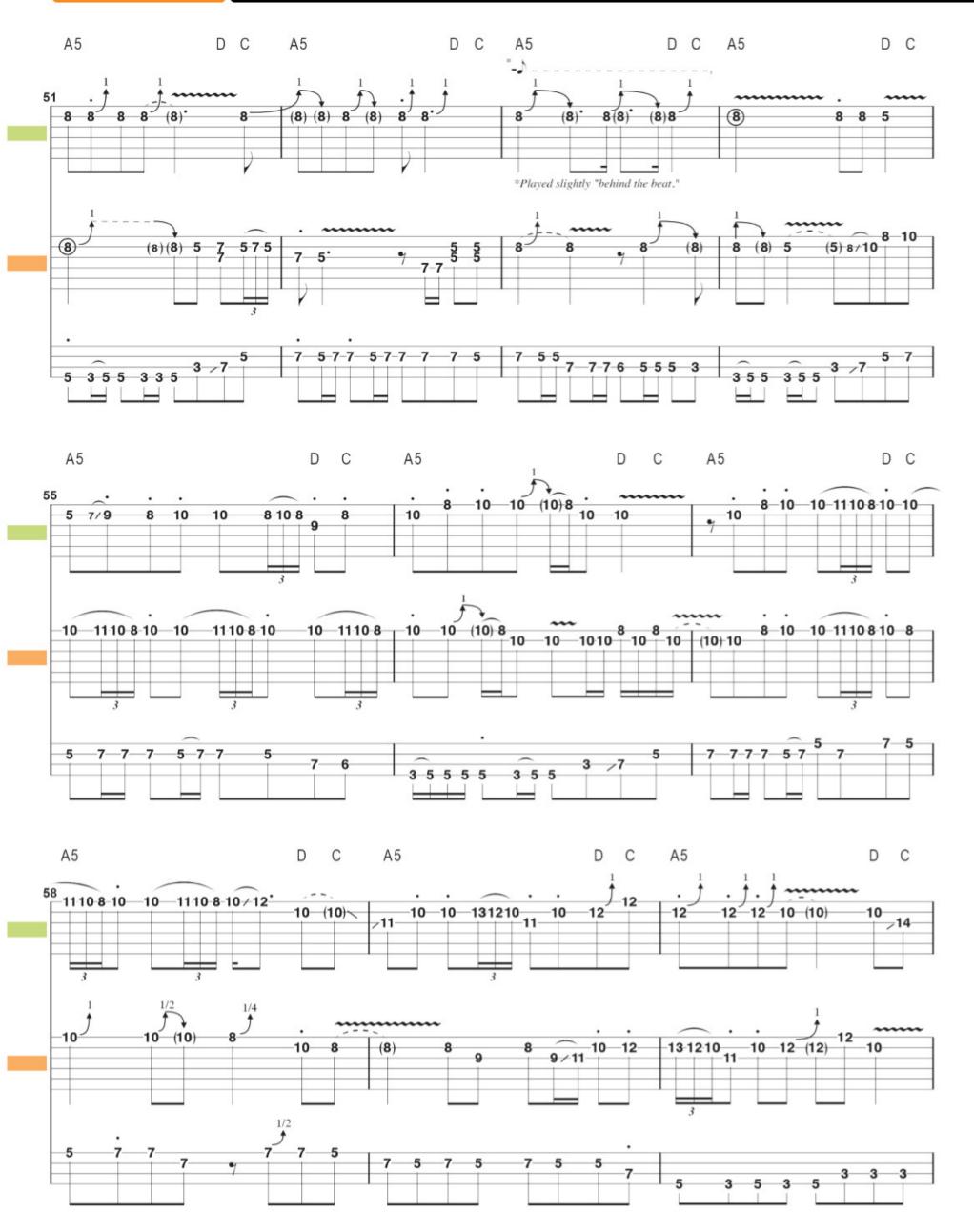


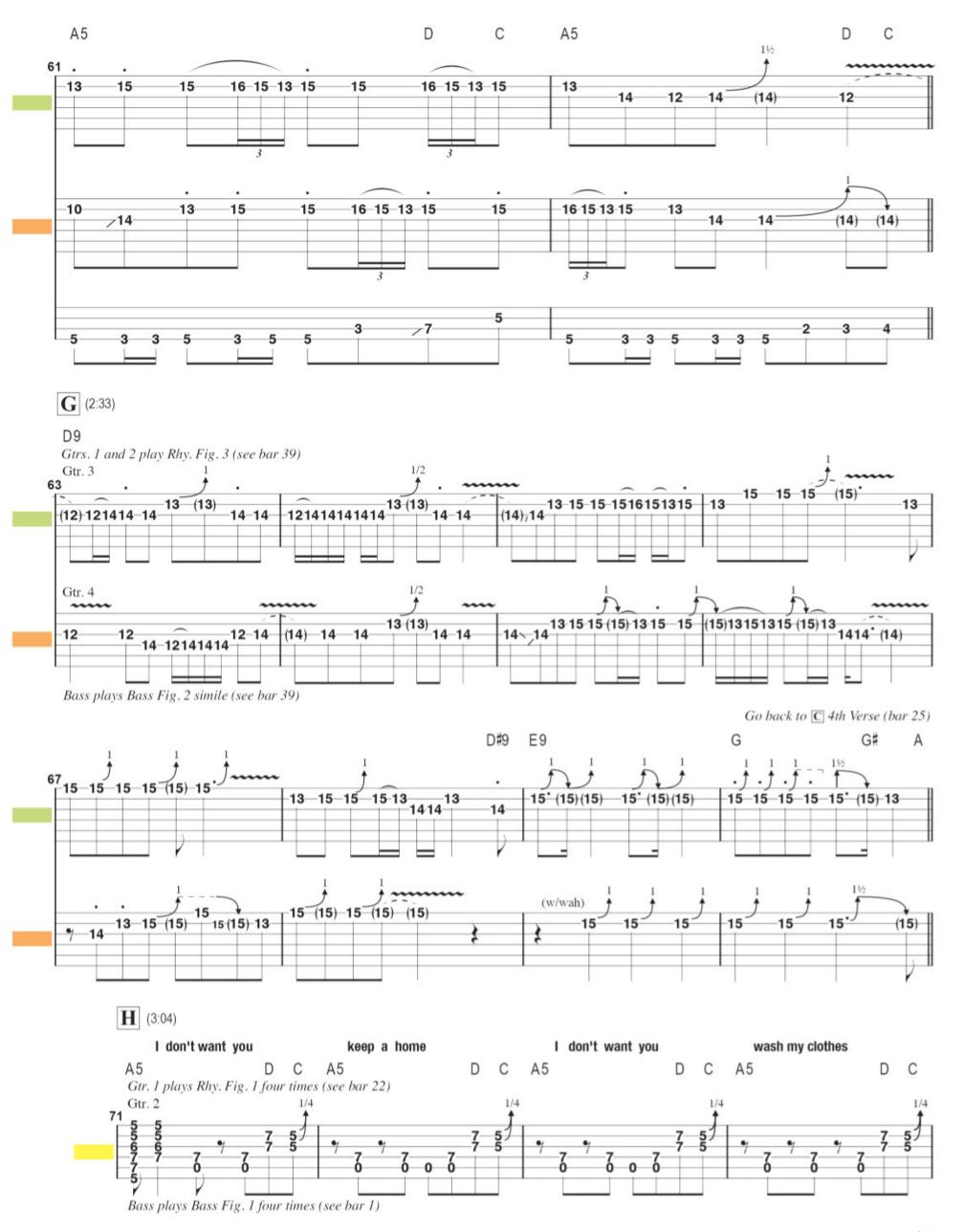
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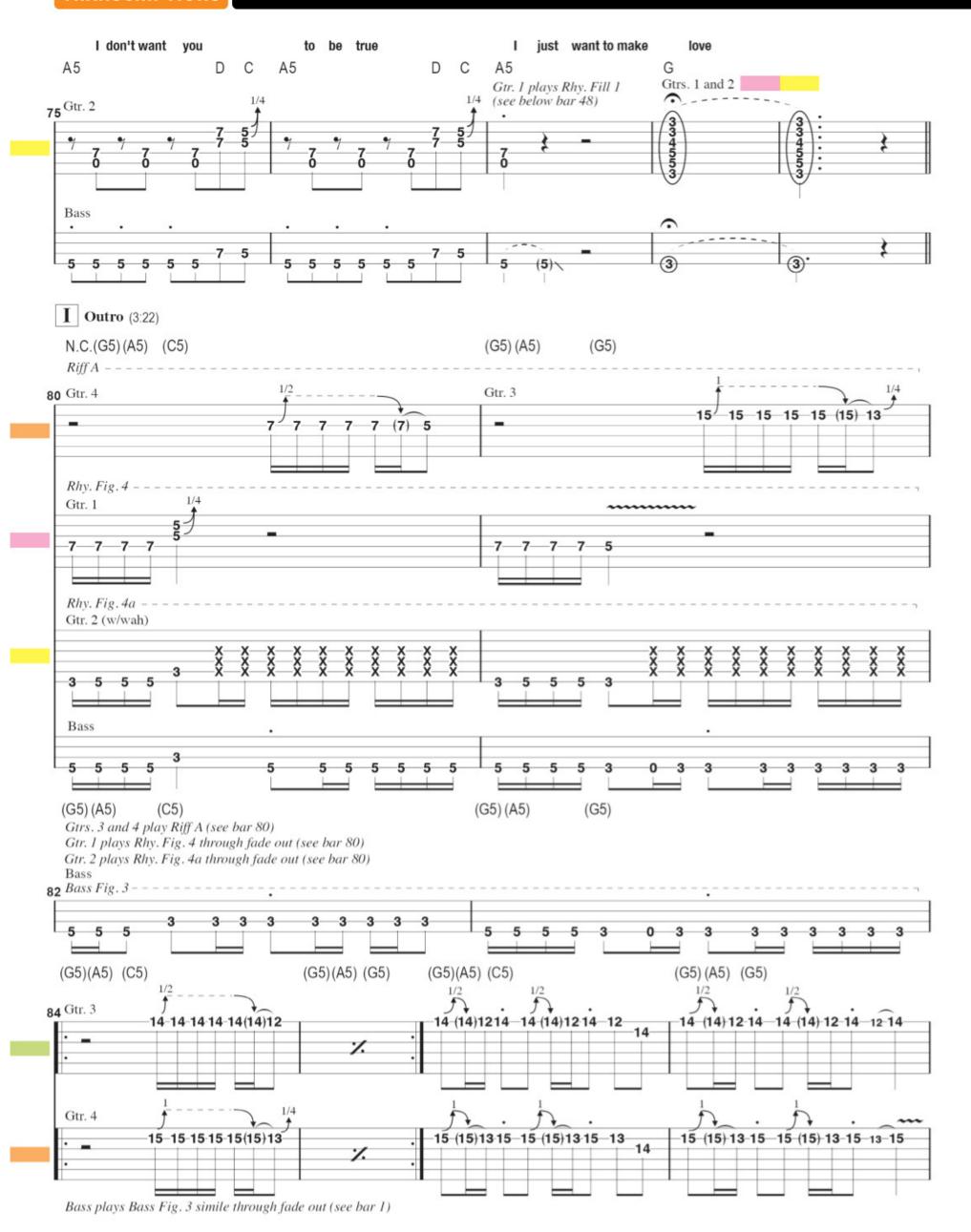










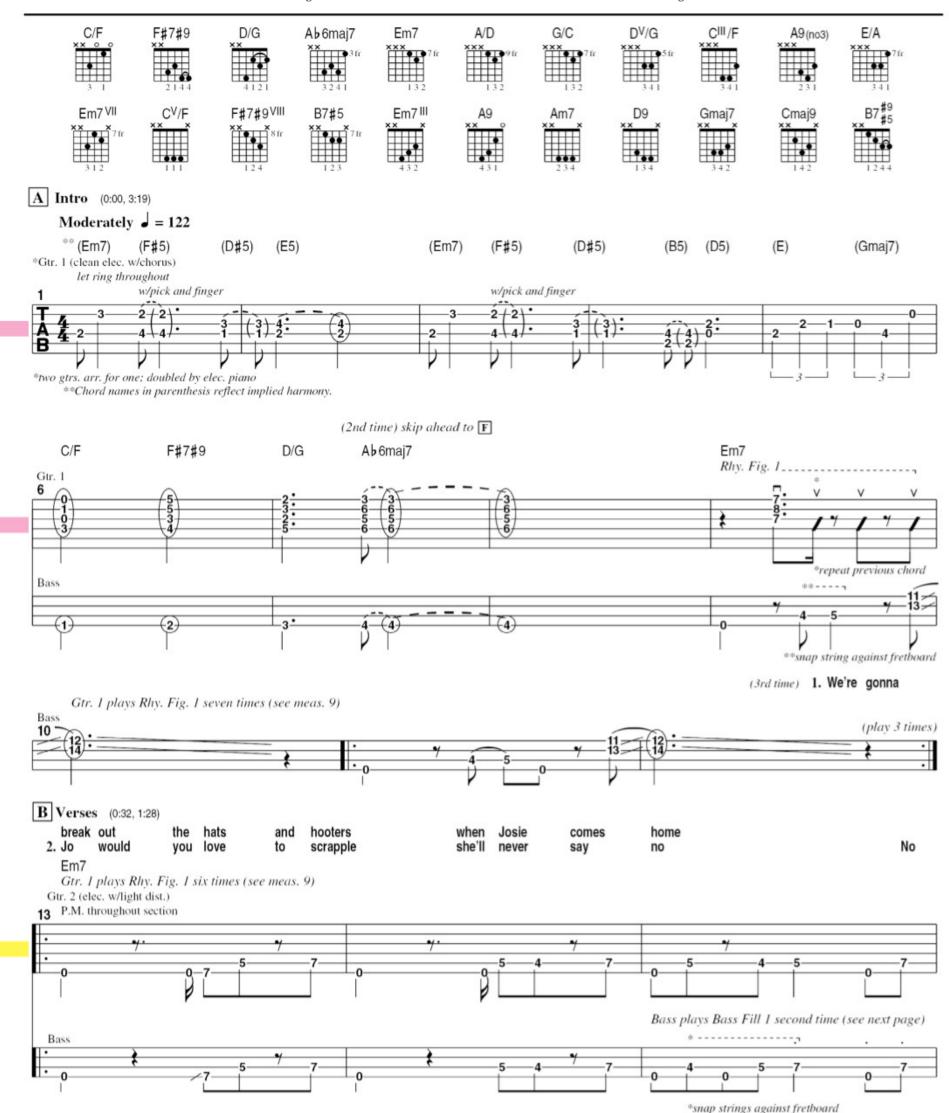




"JOSIE" **Steely Dan**

As heard on AJA

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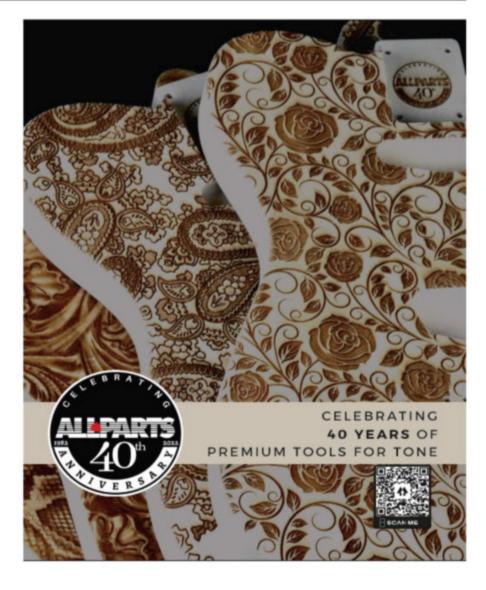
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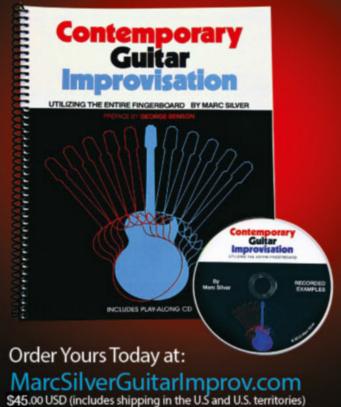
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C. 1991-PRESENT COLLINGS OM2H



Robert Earl Keen performs in Spicewood, Texas, with his well-worn Collings OM2H

GUITAR builders have called Texas home over the years. Houston's Robin Guitars offered various electric models until 2010. Austin's Mark Erlewine has made custom instruments for Billy Gibbons, Dusty Hill, Johnny Winter and distinguished non-Texans like Mark Knopfler and Paul McCartney. Mike Stevens (one of the founders of the Fender Custom Shop) also builds custom creations like his Les Plank, Slant and even Junior Brown's famous Guit-Steel in his workshop in Alpine.

However, the biggest guitar-making success story in Texas is Austin's Collings Guitars, which is best known for its finely crafted acoustic flattops but also offers solid, semi-hollow and hollow body electrics, acoustic jazz archtops and mandolins. By far the most popular Collings guitar is the OM2H, which has remained a best-seller since shortly after the model's introduction in 1991. Based on Martin's legendary OM orchestra model guitars from the Thirties "golden era," the OM2H offers a refined design that stands on its own merits and is much more than an imitation of its initial inspiration.

The OM2H is constructed from carefully selected materials — Sitka spruce tops, East Indian rosewood backs and sides

and Honduran mahogany necks — that are individually matched for each instrument to maximize its tonal performance. The neck is carved to a modified V profile that is more rounded and comfortable than vintage V-shaped necks, and immaculate fretwork combines dressing by hand and PLEK machine leveling. Pre-war-style scalloped X-bracing provides highly responsive dynamics, impressive volume projection and an ideal balance of focused bass, warm, harmonically rich mids and bell-like treble.

The OM2H's supreme balanced tone has made it a popular choice for fingerstyle guitarists, but it performs equally well for rhythm strummers and single-note lead flatpickers. Its character can be sweet and sultry when played softly or rough and rambunctious with a rowdy approach. No surprise then that the Collings OM2H has found its way into the hands of a wide variety of players from Keen (Robert Earl, that is) to Keef (Mr. Richards of the Rolling Stones). Other notable OM2H fans include Jeff Smallwood (multi-instrumentalist in Celine Dion's band) and former American Idol contestant Jason Castro. There's a very good chance that some fingerstyle specialist in your own neck of the woods plays a Collings OM2H as thousands have sold over the last three-plus decades.

TONE TIP



Tip: The OM2H ships with D'Addario EJ16 Phosphor Bronze .012-.053 gauge strings, and for optimum balance and responsiveness it's best to use a similar set of light-gauge strings when restringing. If you prefer a brighter tone, try a set of 80/20 Bronze light-gauge strings.



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